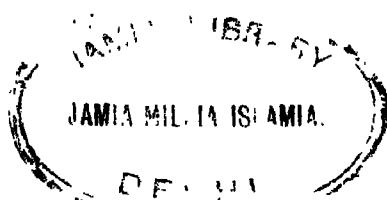
THE NATIONAL CULTURE OF INDIA

By the same author

THE WAY OF GANDHI AND NEHRU

WHAT IS GENERAL EDUCATION

THE NATIONAL CULTURE OF INDIA

by
S. ABID HUSAIN

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To

SAIYIDIN *and* AZIZ

FOREWORD

In this book "The National Culture of India" Dr S. Abid Husain indicates the central characteristics of Indian culture as it has grown from its beginnings to its present position. His presentation of the subject is marked by ability, vision and purpose. He argues that there has been a common spiritual outlook on life, to which various races and religions have made contributions. "India's cultural history of several thousand years shows that the subtle but strong thread of unity which runs through the infinite multiplicity of her life, was not woven by stress or pressure of power groups but the vision of seers, the vigil of saints, the speculation of philosophers, and the imagination of poets and artists and that these are the only means which can be used to make this national unity wider, stronger and more lasting." It may appear somewhat strange that our government should be a secular one while our culture is rooted in spiritual values. Secularism here does not mean irreligion or atheism or even stress on material comforts. It proclaims that it lays stress on the universality of spiritual values which may be attained by a variety of ways.

Religion is a transforming experience. It is not a theory of God. It is spiritual consciousness. Belief and conduct, rites and ceremonies, dogmas and authorities are subordinate to the art of self-discovery and contact with the Divine. When the individual withdraws his soul from all outward events, gathers himself together inwardly, strives with concentration, there breaks upon him an experience, sacred, strange, wondrous, which quickens with him, lays hold on him, becomes his very being. Even those who are the children of science and reason, must submit to the fact of spiritual experience which is primary and positive. We may dispute theologies but we cannot deny facts. The fire of life in its visible burning compels assent, though

not the fumbling speculations of smokers sitting around the fire. While realisation is a fact, the theory of reality is an inference. There is a difference between contact with reality and opinion about it, between the mystery of godliness and belief in God. This is the meaning of a secular conception of the state though it is not generally understood.

This view is in consonance with the Indian tradition. The seer of the Rig Veda affirms that the real is one while the learned speak of it variously. Asoka in his Rock Edict XII proclaims : "One who reverences one's own religion and disparages that of another from devotion to one's own religion and to glorify it over all other religions, does injure one's own religion most certainly. It is verily, concord of religions that is meritorious." *Samavaya eva sadhuh.* Centuries later Akbar affirms: "The various religious communities are divine treasures entrusted to us by God. He must love them as such. It should be our firm faith that every religion is blessed by Him. The Eternal King showers his favours on all men without distinction." This very principle is incorporated in our Constitution which gives full freedom to all to profess and practise their religious beliefs and rites so long as they are not repugnant to our ethical sense. We recognise the common ground on which different religious traditions rest. This common ground belongs of right to all of us as it has its source in the Eternal. The universality of fundamental ideas which historical studies and comparative religion demonstrate is the hope of the future. It makes for religious unity and understanding. It makes out that we are all members of the one Invisible Church of God though historically we may belong to this or that particular religious community.

Dr. Abid Husain has made certain suggestions for strengthening national unity and whether we accept them or not, they deserve the serious consideration of all thoughtful Indians.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

2, King Edward Road,
New Delhi, 20 *April* 1955

PREFACE

In the second half of the eighteenth century the emergence of the United States of America as a free democratic power, which served as an indirect cause of the French Revolution, was an epoch-making event. It deepened and broadened the trickling stream of modern democracy into a mighty perennial river. Today when the sources of the democratic impluse seem to be drying up in many parts of the world, the birth of the new Republic of India is a momentous event which brings a new message of hope to all lovers of freedom. But this hope is not free from a lurking fear that the introduction of democracy may prove to be premature in India as it has been in some other Asian countries.

There are three main reasons for the failure of democracy to take firm roots in various countries of Asia. In some, national disposition and historical tradition combined to create an unfavourable climate; in others, the people lacked the minimum education and political consciousness and in the case of one or two countries anti-democratic forces from outside exercised a retarding influence. Luckily in India none of these obstacles is so great as to be a real danger to the democratic experiment. The idea of democracy is not quite new to the Indian mind. Though ancient India did not know anything like the present elaborate system of representative government, there was a primitive democracy on the village level. The people, innocent of book-learning, as most of them are, do not lack the practical good sense and the native public spirit which form the basis of democracy. This was amply proved during the first General Elections in free India—the biggest in the history of mankind. As for external influences, they are on the whole favourable to democracy. The *only* danger to our new democracy, and much greater than it would appear to the superficial observer

is that Indian Nationhood and National Culture is a delicately balanced system of unity in diversity and if this balance is disturbed by a wrong handling of the cultural problem, there may be a terrible disintegration, putting an end not only to the democratic system but to all peace and order and our hard-won freedom may be lost to forces of tyranny, external or internal.

The purpose of this book is to discuss this vital problem as far as possible, from an objective point of view, to study the past development and present position of Indian Nationhood and National Culture and to consider the ways and means of preserving and strengthening their integrity.

It must be mentioned here that when this book was first written in Urdu, India had not yet been split into two separate sovereign states and my scope of discussion comprehended the whole of undivided India. The partition of the country due mainly to the forces of cultural separatism, has in the first place, proved that the dangers pointed out by me were real and in the second place made it necessary to confine the discussion generally to India proper (Bharat) which is the major heir to the cultural heritage of undivided India. But I must emphasise that I regard the whole subcontinent as one cultural unit (in the broader sense of the term) whose two parts are so closely bound to each other, not merely by common history and geography, but by a thousand inner bonds, that their total severance in the present form cannot last long and the day is not far when they will have to form at least a virtual confederation like the United States and Canada, if not a regular federation like the two parts of Canada.

I have to express my deep sense of gratitude to the Rockfeller Foundation whose help enabled me to live and work at my book in the pretty little town of Tuebingen in Germany away from all private and public worries, in a climate physically bracing and mentally stimulating. My thanks are also due to Dr Tarachand who kindly went through the typescript correcting errors and suggesting improvements and

to Dr Radhakrishnan who was good enough to write a foreword to the book.

ABID HUSAIN

Jamia Nagar,
May 1956

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE first edition of this book was an abridgment of the original Urdu work in three volumes published in 1946. Most of the chapters were cut short and the whole compressed into much less than half of its former volume.

But it was found that the chapter dealing with the ancient period was too brief in proportion to those in which the medieval and modern periods were discussed. So in revising the book for the second edition, I have expanded Chapter Two of the second edition into six chapters (Chapters Two to Seven). Besides, the last chapter has been completely recast so as to take a more comprehensive view of the problems we have to solve before a new cultural synthesis, which is necessary to ensure our national unity and freedom, can be achieved.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I

THE MOST TEDIOUS task in scientific discussion is definition—specially of abstract terms. To find a general concept which can comprehend an infinite number of particular objects, gives a headache to all who have not been favoured with more than their fair share of pure reason. The reason why ancient Athenians could not suffer Socrates, was that he forced everybody to define abstract terms like Justice, Temperance, Love, etc. and exasperated them by pulling to pieces every definition that they attempted. But unfortunately in dealing with scientific problems one cannot do without definitions. If you and I start an argument, as happens very often, without a precise notion of what we are talking about, we are apt to involve ourselves into ridiculous contradictions like the victims of Socrates' sense of humour known as Socratic Irony. So it is just as well that before we begin our discussion we try to have a fairly clear idea of the import of those words, at least, round which the whole discussion revolves—Nation and Culture.

First let us see what meaning people generally attach to the word "culture". The sense in which the term is most frequently used, is good taste and refined manners. But it is also used for material embodiments of good taste and refinement. So we often refer to the buildings, gardens and paintings of the Moghul period as relics of the Moghul culture. Again, collective instututions, codes and systems are also known as cultural objects. So the political and educational system of the Greeks and the legal code of the Romans are regarded to be the most important aspects of their respective cultures. And lastly the term culture has sometimes a still more general and abstract connotation of a system of ultimate ends or norms of life. When people

make the disputable assertion that Eastern culture is more spiritual than Western they use the word in this most general and abstract sense. We will find that all these things represent the various aspects and modes of existence of one and the same complex.

Here the phrase "modes of existence" requires some explanation. Two modes of existence, physical and mental, are familiar to all of us. My body which is something tangible, which I myself and other people can apprehend through the external senses, has a physical existence. My thoughts and feelings which are directly perceptible to me only, have a mental existence. But philosphers point out to us other modes of existence of which we are not ordinarily conscious. Those ideas, beliefs, principles, which are not confined to a single individual but are shared by many, those collective institutions which are handed down from generation to generation as religion, morality, law, art, state, cannot be said to have a subjective or transitory existence but should be credited with a more permanent objective entity which could be called *objective mental existence*. A fourth mode of *ideal existence* could be ascribed to those norms or standards of perfection, those ultimate moral values by which we judge every object, every action, every principle of life—even life itself. The fifth and highest mode, is that of Absolute Existence which religion knows as God. Of these the one which interests us here as bearing upon the definition of culture, is ideal existence which we will examine a little more closely.

The point in which metaphysical theories differ from one another, is the concept of existence. To some philosophers matter, to others an immaterial substance which they call spirit or mind, is the only fundamental entity which manifests itself in the multiplicity of objects which we call the world. But almost all of them have to make some distinction among the levels of existence named above though they may not recognise them as separate modes. So the conception, in some form or another, of values which are not transient and subjective but have a

certain permanence like objective beings is so common among philosophers that we may safely call it universal. There is, no doubt, much difference about the real nature, the number and the order of importance of such ultimate moral values but that is not relevant to our purpose. What we are concerned with is that all thinking people recognise some sort of ultimate standards or norms. All agree that one or the other of them is always the end of every moral action and the basis of every moral judgement.

Now, if we look back on the four meanings of the word culture mentioned in the foregoing pages, we will find that the concept of culture is very closely related to that of ultimate values. The most general terms in which culture could be explained would be something like this: "The sense of ultimate values which a certain society has and according to which it wants to shape its life."

This initial explanation given above refers to the *ideal aspect* of culture. Now the collective complexes (state, society, art, science) which are permanent results of the attempt to create ultimate values could be regarded as its *objective mental aspect*, the qualities and attitudes of individuals inspired by these values as its *subjective aspect*, and the physical objects in which these values are embodied, e.g. buildings, pictures, etc. would be its *material aspect.*

After this preliminary discussion, it is comparatively easy for us to give a definition of culture. We can now say "culture is a sense of ultimate values possessed by a particular society which it has expressed in its collective institutions, which its individual members express in their dispositions, feelings, attitudes and manners as well as in significant forms which they give to material objects." This definition may not stand the cross-examination of a Socrates but it has given us a comprehensive concept including all shades of meanings in which the word culture is used. In order to make the idea more clear we will try to distinguish it from two allied concepts—religion and civilization.

Religion in its wider sense coincides with, and goes beyond, culture and in its narrower sense, forms an import-

ant part of it. Where religion signifies the inner experience which reveals to the mind the real meaning and purpose of life, it is the very soul of culture; but where it is used for the external form in which the inner experience has crystallised itself, it is only a part of it. Religion as the inner realisation of the Highest Truth, can never be opposed to culture; but positive religion, when it has degenerated into mere form without substance, is often in conflict with cultural life.

Civilization is sometimes used as just another word for culture but generally in the sense of a higher order of culture. As a matter of fact civilization is that stage in the cultural development of a people when they begin to live in big habitations called cities which represent a higher level of material life or as the Westerners call it, "a higher standard of living". But a higher standard of material life has a cultural content only when it is imbued with, or serves as a means of attaining some ultimate moral value. When such life is in conflict with one of the ultimate moral values, or even when it is devoid of any such values, it will prove to be an obstacle to cultural progress. So civilization is not always an ally but sometimes an enemy of culture. History shows us many instances in which an old degenerate civilization had to be weeded out so that true culture could thrive anew.

II

Culture resides in a group of human beings called society. If a certain society has or wants to have political unity as well as cultural, it is called a nation. We have now to get a more precise idea of what a nation means.

Nationhood as a political concept is not quite new; but it has acquired a new significance in modern Europe. Formerly state was regarded, along with religion, race and culture, as one of the forces which brought and held people together. But when the influence of religion over the minds of the people declined in Europe and the Church

ceased to be the binding force which it had been, the state grew to be the real unifying factor and the sense of nationhood, i.e. of being the citizens of the same state became the most powerful bond of unity.

The general idea of a nation is a group of men living under the same political order in the same state. But it is not an adequate definition. If different groups of people are living in the same state by a historical accident or under compulsion we are not justified in calling them a nation. As a matter of fact, the *acceptance* by people in some form or another, of a certain political order is the very basis of the modern concept of nationhood. So we have to define nation as a group of people living, of *their own free will* or striving to live, under the same political order in the same state. This definition covers the two essential conditions of nationhood. All other characteristics which we can observe in the existing nations are the pre-conditions paving the way for the formation of a nation.

These pre-conditions for an ideal nation are : domicile in a compact geographical area, unity of race, religion, language and general culture, and a common history. Obviously if a group of men has all these things, it can very easily form itself into a nation and its nationhood would be most strong and enduring. But nowhere in the world, not even in the West where the present idea of nationhood was born and fostered, there exists a nation which fulfils all these conditions. Let us take first the racial element. All anthropologists agree that there has been such a mixing up of all racial stocks in most parts of the world, perhaps more so in the West, that the claim of any nation, that all or most of its members belong to a single pure stock, is a myth. It is the same with religion. Except for some minor nations which enjoy a certain degree of religious unity, we see that every nation is a conglomeration of different confessions and faiths, and of those who have no faith or confession at all. Only geographical, cultural and linguistic unity and a common history are the characteristics found in most of the nations. But there

are countries like Switzerland and Canada having more than one national language. There is the USA where people of different races and cultures, without any common history, were welded together simply by living together and speaking the same language. So if we study the circumstances under which nations were actually formed we could, at the most, say that geographical unity and the unity of the general cultural life are the necessary preconditions of nationhood. Unity of race, religion, and language or a common history, though most important, are not indispensable.

The conclusion to which this discussion leads us is this : People living in a compact geographical area, with a general cultural unity, have the minimum requisite for nationhood and can become a nation by accepting a particular political order and forming a state. Now the more additional factors these people have in common—language, race, religion, history—the stronger would the bond of nationhood prove to be. In most cases, these additional factors automatically develop by political association over a long period. For instance, when the American nation came into being it had no common history but now after almost two centuries of sharing one another's weal and woe the Americans have a common history which binds them together almost as closely as that of the oldest European nation. Similarly the unity of language in Great Britain and France did not exist at the birth of these nations but developed in due course. Sometimes attempts are made to produce these common factors by force, e. g. those by rulers of European countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to impose uniformity of religious belief among their subjects. But such attempts seldom succeed and generally lead to disastrous consequences.

III

Now let us look at the India of today and see which of the conditions for the formation of a nation mentioned in the

foregoing pages, exist here and which can be evolved in course of time.

The first essential condition, geographical unity, is found in India to a degree which very few national states can boast of. A glance at the map will show that impassable mountains in the North, open sea to the South, South-East and South-West, form the most sharply defined natural boundries one could imagine. To the North-East and North-West beyond the frontiers artificially created between the parts of the sub-continent called India and Pakistan, there are natural barriers no less well-defined. So there can be no doubt that Nature designed this entire region to be a perfect illustration of the geographical term country. Moreover, undivided India was a self-sufficient economic unit and even after division the residuary state of Bharat (India) has all the natural resources necessary for a balanced economy if they can only be properly developed.

Where geographical and economic unity exists to such an extent, one would naturally expect to find some sort of cultural unity because physical and economic factors are effective, though not exclusive, influences in shaping cultural life. Indeed, when we look at the cultural history of India, we find that in spite of the multifarious differences, there is basic unity in the thinking, feeling and living of Indians which waxes and wanes with the changing political constellation but never ceases. Several times have the forces of disintegration, external and internal, threatened to shatter this unity but always India's spirit of oneness has re-asserted itself and has blended opposing tendencies and movements into a new harmonious culture. Today when we are passing through a period of cultural confusion, if not chaos, this spirit of unity persists under the surface of particularism which seems to be rife in the country. Only it has to be brought out and developed not by arbitrary methods, but according to its own inner laws. The most potent factor of cultural unity, the national language seems to have turned into a dividing force. But as we will see in the special chapter devoted to this question, if the

linguistic problem which is the core of the whole cultural problem in India, is handled with understanding and imagination, the urge for cultural unity which is in our very blood, will overcome all separatist tendencies and strengthen the foundations of political unity.

A common history is another strong force which binds the people of India together. Most of the people who came to India from other countries, have been living side by side with the original inhabitants for thousands of years. Even the last of the series, the Muslims from North-Western countries have been here for eight to twelve centuries; and though the story of their life might have been different from that of the rest in the beginning, for the last two hundred years—a period equal to the whole history of the USA—their lot has been the same as that of the rest, i. e. they have passed through the same political and economic bondage and exploitation, by the same foreign power.

After surveying the various unifying factors, we should look at those which are regarded as forces of division favouring separatist tendencies in our country—race and religion.

In the early stages of evolution of the human society race played a very important part as the basis of social and cultural unity. But as emigrations, conquests and colonizations led to such a mixing up of the various races that it was not easy to distinguish them from one another and as the human mind advanced from brute existence to civilized life, where community of moral values is stronger than that of flesh and blood, race lost much of its importance. But still during periods of cultural degeneration, when the faith of the people in moral values is shaken, they relapse into the worship of the idol of race and a state of society bordering on tribal life. India had been passing through such a period, before the national movement heralded a new age. The caste system, much more rigid and complicated than the simple Varnashram of the ancient period, was dominating the whole social and cultural life. Even the Muslims, whose religion was essentially a crusade against the race-worship of the pre-Islam Arabs, had on the whole

degenerated into a sort of "tribalism." It showed itself at its worst at the time of elections for the local and higher legislative bodies. Whether it was a question of Chaturvedi or Srivastava, Ghosh or Bose, Iyer or Ayyangar, Qureishi or Ansari, "tribal" loyalty was the moving force. Class, party, nation, country and in some cases, even religion, counted for nothing. To some extent this sectional loyalty still persists but it is now fighting a losing battle against larger loyalties to community (religious and linguistic), party and nation. Along with race, religion also had a bad name as a dividing force. To the conflict between the two largest communities in India, the Hindus and the Muslims, is ascribed the division of India. But an unbiased study of contemporary history will show that it was not religious feeling itself but extraneous elements which had become associated with religion, and the vested interests which used the name of religion for their own purpose, that started the separatist movement culminating in the partition of the country. As far as pure religion is concerned, there is a fundamental harmony in the inner spiritual experience of Hindus and Muslims. No doubt on the level of positive religion—dogma, ritual, religious law—there are considerable differences which could lead to perpetual conflict. But the heart of India which supplies life-blood to Muslims as well as Hindus, has been so nurtured on the breadth of mind and vision of mystical traditions, that religious antagonism leading to war, which was a common phenomenon in Europe, in the Middle Ages, was rare in Indian history. Even in the last thousand years when two religions, so entirely different as Hinduism and Islam, were brought together on the soil of India, her Saints and Sufis created an atmosphere of not mere toleration but of harmony so that, while Hindu and Muslim princes were struggling for power, the common people of both religions could live amicably together. This atmosphere of religious harmony continued more or less to the end of the last century. It was only in the beginning of the present century that motives and interests which were not even remotely connected with religion, used the

magic of its name to set the common man—Hindu and Muslim—against each other and started the series of riots leading to the vivisection—for that is the only proper word to describe the cutting up of a living organism—of India.

That these clashes did not occur spontaneously on account of religious differences but were engineered by interested parties from non-religious motives, becomes clear when we see that they started during a period of political unrest and economic stress, became particularly violent at each municipal or parliamentary election and were led by those who had closer relations with the British Empire than with the Kingdom of Heaven.

To sum up the foregoing discussion, three pre-conditions of nationhood—geographical and economic unity and a common history exist in India to a higher degree than in many countries of the world ; in the cultural field there is, under the surface of local and communal variety, a deep basic unity. On the other hand, the spirit of "tribalism", the linguistic parochialism, and the so-called religious communalism are acting as dividing forces.

After a careful survey of all the relevant circumstances one comes to the conclusion that the type of all embracing nationhood which binds together the constituent groups and individuals, not only through bonds of loyalty to the same state, but through those of uniformity in all departments of life, can never grow on Indian soil. The various cultural and religious groups which form the Indian nation, have within the general sphere of a common outlook on life, their special spheres of living and thinking which they are not prepared to give up at any price. The philosophy of life which gives priority to the political values over the religious and cultural values and demands from the various groups of people the sacrifice of their cherished distinctive cultures for the sake of total national unity, is foreign to Indian mind. Even in Europe where the mental climate is more suited to extreme forms of nationalism, they are kept in check by the stronger force of democracy and it is only in some parts and for short periods of time, that

they could thrive under fascist governments. In India, past traditions as well as present circumstances, favour the growth of a peculiar type of nationhood which is federal more in the cultural than in the political sense—which promotes a common national culture but at the same time ensures for various communities freedom to maintain and develop their own cultural and religious traditions, so long as they are not detrimental to national unity and general welfare.

Once this point is cleared up, there is no doubt that India is fully capable of achieving lasting national unity. All that physical and historical forces could do to create the necessary pre-conditions for such a unity has been done. What is now required is a conscious effort to promote the forces of unity and to put down those of division and disunity.

IV

All these conditions which we have so far discussed are necessary but not sufficient to make a nation. They are the pre-conditions of nationhood but the essential condition which actually constitutes it is the general will of a people to be a nation. The question if such a will exists in India, may appear to be simply rhetorical, after the acceptance of the Indian Constitution by a representative Constituent Assembly and its endorsement by a general election based on universal adult suffrage. There is no doubt that both these historical events provide final legal sanctions or what has been evident to all observers for at least three quarters of a century, that the people of India in the restricted sense of Bharat (with which we are concerned in the present discussion) want to have a common political order and want that order to be a federal democratic state. What we want to find out now, if this will to national unity, is founded on the solid rock of harmony and mutual confidence among the various cultural groups so as to make it as strong and lasting as all of us earnestly desire it to be.

It is an extremely unpalatable truth but it has to be

told that in India minorities—whether religious, racial or cultural—are not satisfied by the treatment meted out to them by the respective majorities, but constantly complain of invidious discrimination against them. This discrimination is generally exercised in three fields—political, economic and cultural. In the political field members of minority groups are often excluded, in spite of their acknowledged ability, from leadership of a political party or membership of a legislative body or cabinet ; in the economic field they find it is made difficult for them to get into public or private services or business; in the cultural field efforts are made to suppress their distinctive culture specially their language. It must be said in all fairness that in the political and economic field such discrimination is, in the first place, not universal, and in the second place, meets with strong condemnation and opposition from many responsible leaders of public opinion and members of Government. But cultural intolerance is so widespread and so strongly rooted that few of our leaders have the inclination or the courage to raise their voices against it. The reason why this intolerance, which is against all Indian tradition, has affected so many people, is that it appears in the guise of patriotism. Many people sincerely believe that in order to establish a strong and lasting unity on an all-India level (or regional level) it is necessary that in the whole of the Indian Union (or in the whole of the regional unit) there should be one culture and one language, and that obviously the language and culture of the majority, which uniformity can only be achieved by blotting out of existence, or at least keeping down to a subordinate position, the languages and the cultural traditions of the minorities. In their sincere and pathetic zeal, they do not realise that this repressive cultural policy is not only against all principles of democracy and justice, against all the traditions of Indian tolerance, but is likely to lead exactly to the opposite of what it is aiming at. The attempt to achieve national unity at the expense of sectional languages and cultures. will arouse such resentment and unrest among the

various and numerous minorities that the considerable amount of unity, we have at present, will be destroyed and the peace and freedom of the country will be endangered. There can be no doubt that the propagation of the national language throughout India, and of the regional languages in their respective regions, is absolutely necessary and so is the attempt to achieve a greater uniformity of life and outlook in the country. Without a common language and a wider range of common culture, the Indian nation will remain weak and unstable. But this sacred cultural mission can only be carried out by ceaseless effort and missionary zeal, not by force. We will discuss in its proper place what effective measures could be adopted to propagate national language and national culture without doing violence to the languages and cultures of the minorities. What we would like to emphasise here, is that though in India most of the pre-conditions of nationhood as well as the essential conditions, i. e. the general will to nationhood exist, the latter is weak in one respect. Minorities, cultural and religious, do not have enough confidence in the respective majorities that they would honour the guarantee given by the Constitution of India for the protection of minority rights in the political, economic and cultural fields. Unless the majority are wise and prudent enough to give adequate attention to the real or imaginary grievances of the minorities and make a sincere effort to satisfy them, that their respective cultures will not only be tolerated but encouraged, the dissatisfaction of the minorities which appears to be an insignificant rift in the lute, may some day disturb the whole harmony of national life. The price of unity, like that of liberty, is eternal watchfulness. The majorities in truly democratic countries which hold ruling power as a sacred trust, have always to be on the alert. The fear among the minorities that their statutory rights are not respected, even when it is unjustified, has to be taken seriously and every possible effort has to be made to dispel it. Cultural tolerance within the country will not only be a source of strength to the Indian nation but also a guaran-

tee that new India will be tolerant towards other nations with cultures different from hers and will not degenerate into cultural chauvinism which is as bad as, if not worse, than its political variety.

I hope the foregoing pages have given the reader some idea how necessary it is, for putting the new Indian nationhood on a firm and sure foundation, to evolve a pattern of cultural life in the country with a variety of colours and designs worked harmoniously on a ground colour of unfading and indelible unity and that this great object cannot be achieved by impatient haste or compulsion but only through immense patience, infinite love and ceaseless labour of which Mahatma Gandhi has set an ideal example.

India's cultural history of several thousand years shows that the subtle but strong thread of unity which runs through the infinite multiplicity of her life, was not woven by stress or pressure of power groups but the vision of seers, the vigil of saints, the speculation of philosophers and the imagination of poets and artists, and that these are the only means which can be used to make this national unity wider, stronger and more lasting. It is for telling this simple truth that this book has been written.

But in the course of these discussions we will come across another vital problem—that of the struggle between the old and the new which is raging in our minds today. Obviously it is not possible to do justice to this problem in this book. It requires a separate book.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BASES OF INDIAN CULTURE

THERE ARE TWO different sets of theories about the origin of culture—the idealistic and the materialistic. Philosophers and historians subscribe to some form of the one or the other or make an attempt to harmonize them. According to the former, at some particular stage of cultural evolution, an individual or a group of individuals through intuition, inspiration or revelation coming from some supreme power, catch a glimpse of higher values or "ideas". This vision assumes a certain objective mental form in their particular social environment and becomes the group ideal, which is then translated into certain mental and material goods making up what is called culture. Thus, for instance, according to the idealistic theory, the Rishis of the Vedic Age caught a glimpse of certain Ideas through divine inspiration or through their own intuition which, in due course, took the form of an Ideal suited to the social conditions and intellectual capacity of the Aryan community. They tried to put this ideal into practice in the physical environment of the Indo-Gangetic valley and in this process were created the ideas and institutions which constitute the Vedic Culture. The latter class of theories say that the starting-point of culture is the physical environment. In the first stage, such factors as the climate, the material resources and the instruments of production used by a people, put their particular stamp on man's collective life. Then principles and beliefs based on the experience gained from life take shape and finally, by a process of abstraction, we have the ideal concepts which we come to regard as self-existing entities and designate as Ideas. Thus advocates of the Naturalistic Theory will explain the origin of the Vedic Culture by saying that it is based primarily on the agricultural life which the nomadic Aryans adopted when they came to India and on that basis they gradually

reared the edifice of their religion, their philosophy and their social order. It is not my purpose here to enter into the complicated discussions and arguments of the various schools of philosophical thought for and against these theories. My study of history and archaeology, such as it is, leads me to the view that the evolution of culture is the result of the interplay of both the factors—the physical environment and metaphysical ideas. In any case, both the theories recognize the part played by physical environment in the evolution of culture, though they assign varying degrees of importance to it. What has to be emphasized here is that the concrete element of culture which is represented by physical environment and social conditions may be more or less important than the ideational element (represented by ideas, theories and beliefs) but it is really that which gives the local colour to a culture and thus constitutes the special national element. Ideas, theories and beliefs are not bound to any particular locality. They leap across racial, national and geographical boundaries, and establish themselves in any part of the world ; but the concrete element of culture is confined to its own particular locality. In every country we find different types of ideas and beliefs but the concrete aspect of the culture determined by the geographical and social conditions is the same. When we talk of the peculiar common culture of a country we are really concerned with these geographical factors which find expression not only in material forms but also create a special mental atmosphere. It is this atmosphere which gives to the people of a country a common outlook and temperament though they may differ in their religious and philosophical ideas. This common national temper and mind is the most important source of the common national culture. Amongst other sources are the new religious or philosophical movements which take their birth in the country from time to time, or the cultures of peoples who have come from outside and settled in that country, or of those with whom that country has come into contact in war or trade and commerce. But it should be clearly under-

stood that only such elements of these different cultures are considred to be part of the common national culture, as can be incorporated so harmoniously with the common mind of the people, that all sections and communities regard them as their own. The complex formed from these elements is called National Culture.

India's National Culture also consists of these two elements : the common temperament and outlook which constitutes the Indian mind and the intellectual influences of various movements and cultures which have been incorporated harmoniously with the national mind. Amongst these are included cultures which existed in India in the prehistoric period, those with which the country had a temporary contact, those which came from outside and made India their home, and lastly the revolutionary intellectual movements which developed in the country itself from time to time.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of India's geographical configuration is the fact that, barring the mountainous regions of the North and the Eastern and Western Ghats of the Southern Peninsula, the whole country consists either of plains or low plateaus, watered by big rivers. Leaving aside a few cold regions, the climate in the entire country is temperate during one part of the year and hot during the other part. In Bengal and some of the hilly regions, there is an abundance of rainfall but in most parts of the country the rains are moderate and confined to a particular part of the year. Of course, its amount varies within limits, from year to year. In some years parts of the country receive no rainfall at all. While the larger part of the country can be said to have a uniform climate, actually we find all varieties, from the hottest to the coldest and from the most moist to the driest climate. Likewise, *the nature of the soil differs enormously from place to place,* with *the result that practically all kinds of vegetable and* mineral products are available in the country.

Naturally, a country which consists mainly of plains, is well irrigated, and has ample sunshine for the greater part

of the year, is specially suitable for agriculture. That is why, from time immemorial, agriculture has been the main occupation of the people in India. As different parts of the country differ in their products, and these can easily be transported by means of the natural waterways or roads that can be constructed without much difficulty, internal trade developed to a considerable extent. External trade, through land and sea routes, also flourished on a large scale, but it was for many centuries carried on by foreigners, and Indians themselves played a minor part. The bulk of the Indian people did not take to maritime trade readily because the sea was far removed from the hinterland of the country; only the inhabitants of the coastal regions took it up to any appreciable extent. So, under the influence of the physical features and forces, India's economic life developed on an agricultural pattern and this had a marked influence on the shaping of her culture as a whole. It stressed the values of peace and constructive activity more emphatically than those of war and destruction. We meet manifestations of this spirit throughout the history of Indian culture.

The most noteworthy feature of India's economic life is the fact that, while on account of warm and temperate climate, the basic needs of life are fewer than in colder countries, the resources needed for satisfying them are ample. People's basic needs in the way of food, clothing and fuel are very limited and these can be produced easily and in sufficient quantity. It is true that partly on account of our own inefficiency and partly as a legacy of an indifferent foreign government, millions of our countrymen are in a state of abject poverty. But history bears witness to the fact that this was not always the case. Before the British period, no acute shortage of basic requirements of life was experienced except during periods of drought, occurring from time to time, in particular parts of the country. This fact has a special significance for us because, although the economic urges are always an important factor in the life of man, they begin to obsess his mind and dominate his entire life and activity when he is denied the satisfaction

of his basic needs. This truth is illustrated by the fact that the economic element played a much more important role in colder countries, where during the early stages of civilization, man had to concentrate all his attention and energy on the satisfaction of his material needs. This was not so in the warmer countries and consequently economic urges have played a comparatively smaller role in the evolution of Indian culture.

The influence of climate and economic resources on the material aspects of culture, e. g. food, dress, modes of living, etc. is too obvious to need any discussion. No one would deny the fact that the material aspect of Indian culture is also moulded on the pattern of its physical and economic environment. But when one notices the differences which characterized the people's modes of living and behaviour in various regions, one is apt to wonder whether, barring certain common features which the imitation of the Western civilization has produced in the educated classes, there are any common elements at all in the Indian civilization. We shall survey later the present cultural situation in India and show that this common element has always been, and is still present, although foreign invasions on the one hand and the internal forces of disintegration on the other, have been constantly counteracting it.

Besides influencing material culture, the physical environment shapes the physique and features of a people and, no matter how marked may be the differences in features amongst the people of India, there are some common characteristics which distinguish them from other nations. This direct effect of the physical environment on the development of their physique is fairly obvious. But its indirect effect on their temperament and character, on their mental, social and moral life is not so apparent. It is therefore necessary to explain at some length how geographical factors specially the climate of the country have given to Indians a general outlook and temperament and helped to mould their thought and action.

Try to divest your mind of the conception of India

which has been created by a few modern industrialized towns and visualize a vast area of land steeped in the mysterious silence of a moonlight night in summer. You have finished your day's work and have retired to bed but, having had a nap during the day, you do not feel sleepy. The feeling of solitude, which is ever present in the dreary atmosphere of an Indian summer, has become deeper. You feel as if there is nothing in the great infinite universe except you and the star-spangled heavens. For the moment, all your feelings and desires, your cognition and will—in fact your whole self—are steeped in something which can be called contemplation or meditation for want of a better term. In such a state of mind all the sensory distinctions disappear and the subjective experience of unity is unconsciously transferred to the objective world. The intellect whose function is to create unity in our perceptions, thinks of the whole creation as one, and imagination, which is free from the fetters of sense and perception, visualizes this unity.

Such is the atmosphere in which the Indian mind has grown and developed. Naturally, therefore, it has two main characteristics—the capacity for contemplation which dominates all other mental powers, and the capacity to see and apprehend unity in diversity. Students of India's cultural history know that thought has always had a high place in the scale of values in India. But it was not purely abstract or speculative but emotional thought, i. e. not a mere conception of the nature of the universe but its direct intuitive apprehension in which the thinker finds himself steeped in love and reverence for the object of his thought. Such thinking is more religious than philosophical. That is why in India, religious philosophy has always occupied a central place in her cultural life. Likewise on account of the second characteristic mentioned above, the Indian mind has tried in its interpretation of the universe and in the formulation of its thought, to reduce the diversity of its manifestations to a unity.

Let us not misunderstand the import of what has been said above. It should not be taken to mean that we regard

these characteristics of the Indian mind, or others to be mentioned later, as absolutely valuable or that we are unaware of the dangers associated with them. We are fully conscious of the fact that the natural inclinations of individuals as well as groups are often one-sided and it is necessary, for the proper development of the individual or national character, to cultivate them with a proper combination of encouragement and restraint. At the same time, it is a recognized fact that the fundamental nature of individuals and nations cannot be entirely changed; it can only be modified within certain limits set by its own natural capacities. There is no doubt that often speculation has so dominated the Indian mind that it has weakened the powers of action and some Indian thinkers had to revolt against it. Similarly the search for, and love of unity, was sometimes carried to such extremes as to deny altogeher the reality of the manifold phenomena which make up the physical world. Then, in order to restore the balance emphasis had to be laid on the purely materialistic side of reality. But on the whole the supremacy of thought and perception of unity in diversity, are precious traits of the Indian mind and they are mirrored in all the cultures which have developed in India.

These characteristics of the Indian mind, have also considerably influenced the moral values of the people. We have already noted the fact that, on account of its peculiar intellectual trend, it regards the apprehension of the Ultimate Reality to be the highest value and gives the practical values a lower status. Similarly its perception of unity as the principle of life leads it to regard harmony, rather than struggle, as the basis of the moral order. In this respect the contrast between the Indian mind and the modern Western mind stands out clearly. The Western mind assigns great moral importance to the struggle between man and his physical environment and regards the conquest of Nature as the key to cultural progress. The Indian mind on the other hand, has developed in an environment which is blest by a temperate climate, a rich soil, abundant pro-

ductivity and easy communication. Its normal relationship to Nature is not, therefore, one of struggle but of harmony. Its fundamental moral consciousness does not regard the world as full of forces of evil, which man must fight and overcome, but as a place where the law of Goodness and Justice operates to which man has to adapt his life. If this feeling of harmony with the universe is directed properly in the light of the highest values of life it becomes a vitalizing and practical ideal. Otherwise, it is apt to degénerate into fatalism and inaction.

One would expect that in a mind where thought dominates, passion and desires would not be very strong. But that is not the case with the Indian mind. Because on the one hand, in this physical environment, hot blood courses through the veins, stimulating the force of emotions and on the other hand imagination, with which the Indian mind is endowed in no less measure than with intellect, fans the flame of passion further. So emotionalism and sensuousness are also essential characteristics of the Indian temperament. But as these tendencies are opposed to the speculative trend, there is always a strong effort to suppress them. We can constantly see this ebb and flow of abandon and repression, self-indulgence and self-denial in the cultural history of the country and its worst periods have been those in which self-indulgence dominated the life of the people. They were, however, followed by a natural reaction and the phase of self-denial which served as a purgative to cleanse the soul of its accumulated grossness and to bring it back to normality.

We have seen that, on the whole, in most parts of the country, there is a certain regularity and moderation in the changes of the weather. Barring the amount of rainfall which may differ considerably from year to year, the climatic conditions are fairly steady. Every season begins at fixed times and its intensity varies within fixed limits. Cataclysmic phenomena which disturb the normal routine of natural process are rare. There are no volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are slight and infrequent. No

stronger natural accidents than storms and tempests of moderate intensity are experienced by the people. How has this long observation of the regularity and continuity of natural processes reacted on the Indian mind? Perhaps the most important effect has been the feeling, that the operation of the Moral Law is just as regular and continuous as that of the Law of Nature. In the primitive stages man does not distinguish at all between the moral and the physical world. His moral conceptions are based entirely on observation of Nature. So from the very beginning, the Indian mind has adhered firmly to the conviction that the moral consequences of every action are as definite and inevitable as the succession of seasons. The Doctrine of Pre-destination, which is apt to degenerate into fatalism, is in reality the connecting link between the working of the Moral Law and the Natural Law, as conceived by the Indian mind. Its essence is that the consequences of man's action take place in the physical world and are to some extent subject to Laws of Nature, over which man has no control. Obviously this theory is not objectionable in itself but just as the element of quietism present in the Indian mind, can, during the periods of decadence, easily lead to inaction, so can pre-destination easily take the form of fatalism.

There is another characteristic of the Indian mind which also originates from the influence of the regularity and continuity with which the Laws of Nature operate in this part of the world—namely, that the changes which occur in its habits of thought and action, are gradual, not abrupt. In other words, the law of its being is not revolution but evolution. But this does not mean that the Indian mind is incapable of undergoing big changes or that it always takes a very long time over them. What we want to suggest is that the process of change can be felt at every step and its stages can be clearly marked out. The main difference between evolution and revolution is, that in the former we can see all the links in the chain, while in the latter, some of the links are not perceptible and so, when the chain is complete we experience a sudden and intense shock. The

Indian mind is spared of such violent jolts because its reaction to new ideas and movements is conscious and gradual.

We have already seen how the temperate, and in some parts moderately hot, climate of the country, the fertility of the soil and the abundance of water made India suitable for agriculture. So agriculture was started here as soon as the crudest implements for tilling the soil were available. As a rule communities which took very early to agriculture are matriarchal and have a deep and strong feeling for family and social life. All those constructive qualities which are necessary for cultural development, are more prominent in them than in communities which were originally nomadic. They are more peace-loving and humane. That is why in certain parts of the country e. g., in the Indus Valley, culture had passed out of the primitive into the secondary stage of its development thousands of years before the advent of the Aryans. Later, many nomadic and warlike people came to the country and their admixture modified the national temperament considerably. But qualities like the depth of feeling for family life, love of peace and kindness, have always been, and will continue to be important ingredients of the Indian character.

The agricultural life and the general geographical conditions, have also played a great part in shaping the political structure and development of the country. Obviously, in an agricultural country population is not concentrated in a few cities but is scattered over villages. Even today, the number of cities is comparatively small in India and about ninety per cent of the population lives in villages which are, in many parts, wide apart from one another. Towards the end of the ancient period, the population of the country did not, according to historians, exceed one hundred millions and therefore, it must have been more scattered and the villages situated at greater distances. Under such conditions, political development tends towards decentralization and so from the very beginning down to the advent of the British, the basic political unit in India was the village in

which the natural democratic tendencies of the rural community expressed themselves in the form of the village assembly or "Panchayat". But on account of certain other circumstances, this democracy remained confined to the local level.

So the institution of democracy in a nascent state was always present in India though it could not grow to its full stature. Another noteworthy fact is that, although generally the country was divided into many small states, and even when some extensive empire was established, it functioned as a rather loose federation, the idea of political unity has always had a powerful appeal for the Indian mind, so much so, that there is one common idea running through the theories of the state developed by such political thinkers of different views—as Kautilya, Manu, Vishnu, Yajnavalkya and others—namely, that it is necessary for an ideal ruler to conquer other states within the country and bring them under one sway. At the same time the conquering king is advised to entrust the government of the conquered territory to some member of the ruling family and to preserve its ancient social laws and customs. Thus from the point of view of political organization also we find the same idea of unity in diversity dominating the Indian mind.

These are a few of the examples to illustrate the characteristics of the Indian mind and the temperament produced by its special physical and economic environment. They permeate, as a permanent and common element, all the cultures that were either born, or came from outside but developed in this country. The sum-total of these common characteristics—"the national mind"—has the same relation to the life of a people as instincts have to the life of an individual. It may be cultivated, improved or modified; it cannot be killed or repressed or entirely changed.

But the influence of the physico-social environment is only one of the elements, the realistic element, in the formation of a culture. The other important element is the ideational, i.e. ideas, beliefs, principles which have their

own origin in the consciousness of the higher values. This latter element, as we have seen, is not rooted into a particular locality but it can and does find its way from one country or people to another. If we look at the history of the world we will find numerous examples how a religion or a system of philosophy or a political or economic theory, originates in one part of the world and in course of time, spreads over others. Different cultures, belonging to varied types of geographical environments, may accept it in full or in part, according to their special needs and circumstances.

Thus when we consider the ideational aspect of the Indian mind we have to remember that in the first place the ideas which have gone into the making of this mind, are not all the products of this soil but some of them have come from outside. Secondly, they have influenced various groups and classes of people in the country in different degrees with the result that we find different religions and cultures in India, but there is a certain part which has been assimilated by the common mind and has become the greatest common measure of the various sections of the people. If we study the cultural history of India we find that whenever any new movement of thought originated in India or came from outside, it resulted temporarily in accentuating the existing differences. But soon the Indian mind set into motion its process of seeking unity in diversity, and after some time the conflicting elements were harmonized to lay the foundation of a new culture. In order to deal with the present problem of a common culture, it is necessary for us to know how this problem has been solved in the past on various occasions.

The cultural history of India, as of other countries, can be divided into three periods: the ancient, the medieval and the modern. But it is necessary to remember that these three periods in Indian history do not correspond to those in the European in point of time. The ancient period in India begins about 1500 BC and continues up to the end of the eighth century AD, the medieval period continues

up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and so the modern period is only a hundred years old.

About a thousand years after the beginning of the ancient period, a national culture was for the first time established in India. This was the Vedic Hindu Culture which came into being as a result of the interplay of the Vedic Aryan and the pre-Aryan cultures. After some time there was a reaction against certain aspects of this culture and Buddhism formed the basis of the new national culture. Although Buddhism had a deep influence over Indian life and Indian mind, the culture based on it did not last as national culture for any length of time. Its decay was followed by the rise of a new Hindu culture which was again the result of harmonizing many conflicting tendencies in the cultural life of the country. To distinguish it from the earlier Vedic Hindu Culture it is called the Puranic Culture. At the end of the ancient period, long before the advent of the Muslims, the cultural life of India had again become disorganized. But after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, the process of assimilation and fusion started afresh and by the time the Moghul period commenced, the great edifice of a Hindu-Muslim culture, the Hindustani culture had been erected. This time there was a new and significant departure. The Hindustani culture was based not on religion but on some sort of vague national feeling in the political sense.

In this book, I propose to present a brief survey of all the stages of the development of the National Culture from the coming of the Aryans to the end of the Moghul period. I shall then proceed to discuss how, with the advent of the British, the dominant position of Western culture resulted in pushing the national culture into the background and why the contact of the Indian culture with that of the West failed to produce any new fusion which could provide the basis of a new National Culture. Then I shall try to follow the trend of the present cultural movements in India and discuss in what direction they should be orientated in order to help in the evolution once again of a rich and harmonious National Culture.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD
THE INDUS VALLEY CULTURE
(3250 BC—2000 BC)

UP TO THE beginning of the twentieth century the general impression among historians was that the secondary stage of Culture began in India after the advent of the Aryans about 1500 BC so that Indian Culture was regarded as the youngest among the ancient cultures. But in the first quarter of this century the excavations made by the Archaeological Department of India at Harappa in West Punjab and Mohenjo Daro in Sind led to the startling discovery that much earlier than that in the bronze age, there existed in the Valley of the Indus a fairly advanced urban civilization. Later excavations in other parts of the country have so far revealed that in area this culture covered the whole of the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and a considerable part of Kathiawad extending on one side to West Uttar Pradesh and on the other side along the Coastal region on the West to a part of South India. This culture is believed to have reached its zenith about 3000 BC. But it had come into being at least 250 years earlier and must have continued till about 2000 BC when it was destroyed probably by barbarous hordes from the West. So it should be counted among the oldest cultures of the world along with those of Elam, Sumeria, Babylonia, ancient Egypt and ancient China. The Dravidians in South India, who were in close contact with the Sind Valley Civilization, had by 2000 BC reached a high stage of cultural life and kept the torch of civilization burning during the centuries preceding the advent of the Aryans when North India was plunged in darkness. So we can rightly say that India has maintained a more or less advanced cultural life since its emergence five thousand years ago. No other country except China affords an example of a civili-

zation continuing without a break for such a long time.

The ruins of the ancient cities found in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa show, according to Sir John Marshall, that the standard of civilized life reached by the people inhabiting these cities was higher than that of the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians and equal to that of the Sumerians. They were big cities with net-works of regular wide roads, canals for irrigation and sewers for drainage. This shows that they had not only made fairly good progress in civil engineering but had some idea of town-planning also and that there was some civic body like a Municipality or a Local Board. Among the archaeological finds in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa are instruments, weapons and utensils made of earth, copper and bronze. Some of the earthenware are painted. Figures of human beings and animals made of baked clay and bronze have been found in abundance. The most common among these is the figure of a semi-nude woman wearing a fan-shaped cap. This represents the mother-goddess worshipped by them. But the best specimens of the art of that age are seals bearing pictures of Brahmani, bulls, elephants, buffaloes, tigers, etc. or inscribed with pictograph. Ornaments of gold, faience and beads, ivory dice and hairpins bear testimony to the considerable progress which the various industries had made. The gold and silver ornaments in particular, were in the words of Sir John Marshall, "so well-finished and so highly polished that they might have come out of a Bond Street Jeweller's of to-day rather than from a pre-historic house of 5000 years ago". But the most remarkable thing was that in the valley of the Indus people had in those early days not only learnt to grow cotton but had developed textile industry which for centuries afterwards was unknown in other countries. The discovery of the seals made here, in Mesopotamia, Arabia and other countries of West Asia is an indication of commercial and cultural relations which must have existed between these countries and India.

As the pictographs inscribed in the seals of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa have not yet been deciphered, we know

very little about the mental and spiritual life of the ancient inhabitants of the Indus Valley. All that we can say on the strength of the available material is that their religious beliefs and practices are, to some extent reflected in Hinduism. The figures shown on the seals provide ample evidence that they worshipped *Shakti* or the mother-goddess and sacrified goats and other animals to her. There is no doubt that the Hindus derived both these practices from them. Some seals have been found with representations of Shiva. In one of these he is shown with three faces and three eyes wearing a horned head-dress which was replaced later by Hindus with a "trisula" or trident. The worship of rivers, animals, and trees and also the "pipal" is traced to that period. Among animals the bull, the buffalo, the tiger and the elephant were regarded as sacred. In Hindu mythology the bull became the vehicle (*vahana*) of Shiva. The use of Svastika and wheel as the symbols of the sun also dates from that period. Some scholars think that the stress laid on belief in spirits and magic in Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda, which is not in keeping with the teaching of the Rig Veda, was due to the influence exercised by traditions of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Opinions differ about the origin of the builders of this civilization. Some regard them as immigrant Aryans or Sumerians and some as Dravidians. But most scholars agree that they belonged to the old Austric race with a mixture of the races coming from the Mediterranean coast. But before reaching the level of an urban civilization they had lived in India for centuries so that their culture was in spite of some resemblance with the Sumerian, on the whole, essentially Indian. It is very likely that when further research reveals to us a complete picture of the Indus Valley Civilization we shall find in it all the essential features of what later became the common culture of India.

Even now there are strong reasons to believe that the Indus Valley Culture was in its last phase closely associated with the Dravidian Culture and both had a deep influence

on each other. We will find later that the Dravidians made an important contribution to the national culture of India. So if the Indus Valley Civilization has not played a direct role in shaping the present culture of India it has certainly exercised an indirect influence through the Dravidian Culture.

CHAPTER THREE

TWO STREAMS THE DRAVIDIAN CULTURE AND THE VEDIC CULTURE OF THE ARYANS (2000 BC—1000 BC)

ABOUT 2000 BC when the Indus Valley Civilization was being destroyed in North West India by the ravages of wild invaders, the Dravidian Tamil Culture in South India had reached a very high level of development. Archaeological finds point to a long period of commercial and cultural exchange between the Indus Valley Culture and the Tamil Culture. In the Deccan and other parts of South India burial urns and other earthen pots have been found exactly like those which were used in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. Excavations in the Indus Valley have yielded plenty of shells and pearls which must have come from South India. The presence of nearly fifty per cent Dravidian words in the Brauhi language spoken in some parts of Baluchistan is a strong indication that there was a close cultural contact between the Indus Valley and South India in pre-historic times. Obviously this must have been before the destruction of the Indus Valley Civilization about 2000 BC and by that time the Dravidian Culture must have reached a very high level so that it could exercise such a deep linguistic influence over an advanced urban civilization.

According to traditions, early Tamil literature can be traced as far back as 2500 BC and there is positive evidence that long before 1000 BC South India had had three *sangams* (academies) at old Madura, Kapadapuram, and modern Madura. The most prominent member of the first *sangam* was Agastya who wrote the first Tamil grammar called Agathiam. There is a legend that he was an Aryan preacher from the North who had come to South India for propagating the Vedic religion. His twelve disciples wrote large number of treatises on grammar, literature, music,

dance, etc. One of these treatises Tolkappiam written about 1000 BC is still extant. It deals essentially with Tamil grammar but throws valuable light on the cultural life of ancient Dravidians.

In prehistoric times South India, the home of Dravidian Culture, extended very far to the south of the present peninsula. In course of time much of it was submerged under water by continuous violent storms. In one Dravidian community the matriarchal system prevailed and generally mothers were given a high status throughout the Dravidian society. There was no rigid caste system. But later various classes based partly on birth and partly on occupation, developed. The most common religious cult was that of the mother-goddess. Various trees, demons, spirits and the snake (Naga Raja) were also worshipped.

The Dravidians had reached a high level of civilization. They had made considerable progress in agriculture and engineering, put up dams across rivers for irrigation and built cities with walls around them. Their industries, specially the weaving of cotton and woollen cloth, dyeing, making gold and silver ornaments inlaid with precious stones, were fairly advanced. The art of casting iron was also known to them. Trade by land and sea was carried on with the countries of East and West Asia. There is evidence of cultural contact between South India and Egypt about 2000 BC. Dravidians had their own script, numerals and calendar. The progress which they had made in science and literature can be judged by the existence of three academies in an age when the rest of the world had no idea of such institutions.

About 1500 BC while the Dravidian culture was flourishing in the South, the dark period following the destruction of the Indus Valley Civilization was coming to an end in the North West and immigrant Aryans were laying the foundations of a new culture infused with vigour and vitality. There is much difference of opinion about the original home of the Aryans. Formerly, the general idea was that they were the inhabitants of Central Asia. But later

research into the field have made some scholars think that they originally belonged to Scandinavia, others that they inhabited the part of Asian Russia to the East of the Urals. But the only thing which can be said with certainty is that they came to India from the North-West. The hymns to their gods which they composed probably after they had come to India, were later collected into a book called the Rig Veda. The Rig Veda is not only a holy scripture of Hinduism but also the earliest document of Indian history. Most historians think that the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed between 1500 BC and 1000 BC. The religious and cultural life of the Aryans during these five hundred years was deeply influenced by the Rig Veda and it is also the source of all that we know about the period. So it is called the period of Vedic Culture.

The hub of this Culture was the land between the Sutlej and the Yamuna in East Punjab, and it was gradually spreading eastwards over the Doab or the region between the Yamuna and the Ganga. The Aryans had not yet completely subdued the aboriginal tribes whom they called the Dasyus and against whom they were engaged in continuous warfare. They had brought with them a primitive nomadic culture. But their religious ideas and practices, their art of warfare and their poetry were fairly advanced. In India they began to live the settled life of peasants and the various tribes established their little rural democracies.

Representative bodies of tribal chiefs known as the *Sabha* and the *Samiti* ruled under the general control of the Raja or King. Kingship was usually hereditary. The main function of the King was to command the army in the battle. In this he was assisted by the Commander-in-Chief. Next in importance to the King was the Grand Priest (*Purohita*) who presided over sacrificial ceremonies and acted in many cases as the medicine-man curing disease through incantation (*mantra*).

In the begining, Aryan society consisted of two classes—the nobles and the common people. But there were no hereditary castes. When the peaceful conditions in India

and the settled agricultural life had tamed the Aryans, and they had given up fighting the aborigines and wanted to assimilate them in their social system, their social pride made them take special precautions that the blood of the Dasyus did not mix with that of the Aryans. So the Dasyus were constituted into a separate caste called the *sudras* with the lowest position in society and the Aryans were forbidden to inter-marry with them. Later, social distinctions became more pronounced and rigid. Among the Aryans themselves the ruling and fighting class (Kshatriyas) the Priests (Brahmins) the peasants and traders (Vaishyas) grew into separate hereditary castes with restrictions on inter-marriage, etc. This social gradation was given a religious sanction by invoking a verse from the Rig Veda that the Brahmins came from the face of the Creator, the Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Sudras from the sole of his feet.

The basic unit of society was the family which was governed by the patriarchal system. That is to say the father was regarded as the head of the family and the heritage passed from father to son. The mother was treated with great respect but her position in the household was inferior to that of the father. As a rule monogamy was the most widely practised form of marrige.

The Aryans had taken to agriculture but cattle-breeding still held an important place in their economy and was regarded as an occupation superior to that of tilling the soil. Cattles were prized high and used as measure of value and medium of exchange. Their meat was eaten generally by the people. Sheep and goats were also kept and horses were used for drawing war-chariots. Houses were built of mud. The art of making bronze utensils and weapons had made great progress. Spinning, weaving, dyeing, and the carpenter's and goldsmith's trade were also common.

Singing and dancing were commonly practised but the most popular pastime was gambling. People drank intoxicating liquors in excess specially the juice of the *soma* which acquired a religious significance as seen in Soma Veda.

However, the Aryans had not reached any significant level of material civilization and had not yet learnt to build cities. But their religious consciousness was of a higher order than that of other ancient peoples. They neither built temples nor worshipped images. Their devotion consisted in burning fires in their hearths, singing hymns to their gods and offering rice, milk, *soma* or animals as sacrifice. In this they were guided by the Priests. Before coming to India their objects of worship were natural phenomena. Their principal gods were Indra (thunder) Varuna, Mitra, Surya (the sun) Savitra, Pushana, Vishnu, Usha (the dawn), Arti (the earth), Vayu (air), Agni (fire). The *soma* tree was also regarded as sacred because the feeling of exhilaration induced by its intoxicating juice was taken for the state of spiritual bliss.

After coming to India they continued to worship these gods; but the atmosphere of the country radiating Unitism, made them see the unity of Reality in the diversity of phenomena and feel the presence of nature's God behind the visible world of nature as the following verse from the Rig Veda shows:

In the whole universe there was nothing but water.
In the water there was fire which suddenly revealed itself
Showing a glimpse of the One who is the soul of all the gods
To whom shall we offer our sacrifice and our devotion.
The One who through his supreme power
Held back water and out of it created energy
To whom shall we offer our sacrifice and our devotion.
He who is the creator of the earth and of the sky
Who is the creator of the intoxicated mighty ocean,
Pray that His wrath does not descend upon us
To whom shall we offer our sacrifice and our devotion.
O Lord of the Universe! none but Thou
Made this whole world of Creation
Fulfil the Object of our Prayers
Give us riches and happiness.

The Dravidian culture in South India and the Vedic Culture of the Aryans in North-West India were in those days two streams flowing apart. But the time was near when the confluence of the two was to give birth to the first National Culture of India.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIRST CONFLUENCE
VEDIC HINDU CULTURE (1000 BC—600 BC)

IN THE NEXT four centuries the simple Vedic Culture reached a higher stage of development and changed considera• ably in the process. The fundamental change was that on the one hand the Aryan mind gave a philosophical depth to the idea of unity which had already begun to shimmer through the Rig Veda and on the other hand it made the old Indian traditions which it had taken mostly from the Dravidians, an integral part of its religion. Thus a new common religion was developed which we may call the Vedic Hindu religion and served as the foundation of a new culture, the Vedic Hindu Culture. All that we have been able to know about these four hundred years has come to us from three other collections of religious hymns, the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda, the Soma Veda and other related literature. The four Vedas, their commentaries the Brahmanas, the appendices of the Brahmanas known as the Aranyakas and Upanishads are regarded as the revealed scripture of the Hindus. It is these books which have supplied the historians with material for their stories of the Vedic and the Vedic Hindu Cultures.

According to tradition, early in this period a great battle called Mahabharata, in which rulers of all the Indian states took part, was fought between two neighbouring Aryan tribes, the Kurus and the Panchalas. It is not directly mentioned in the Vedas. But there are indications that about 900 BC there was a terrible holocaust after which the political and cultural centre of the Aryans shifted from East Punjab to Hastinapur, the Capital of the Kurus in the Gangetic Doab. Later the Aryans gradually moved further to the East and set up the states of Koshala (Oduh), Kashi (Benaras) Vats (near Allahabad) and Videha and Magadha in Bihar. At the same time they began to

advance southwards. The story of the Ramayana with Shri Ramchandra, son of the Raja of Koshala as its hero, refers to the war the Aryans fought with the help of the Dravidians against the Raja of Ceylon and the Agastya legend, mentioned in the last chapter, shows that about the same time Aryan missionaries were propagating their religion among the Dravidians.

As we have said before great progress was made during this period in political and economic organization as well as in material civilization. Now a well-knit monarchical state had taken the place of the primitive tribal democracy. The Raja was the sovereign but not an autocratic ruler. He had to be guided by the advice of the Brahmins, old traditions and public opinion. The permanent capitals of the Rajas had grown into cities and the political centre of gravity had shifted from the rural to the urban area. The *Sabha* and the *Samiti* had lost their pristine importance. Circles of noblemen had formed round the court and monopolized all the more lucrative administrative posts. The religious ceremony of the coronation and other ceremonies and sacrifices had been introduced. Of these the most famous was the Ashvamedh or horse sacrifice. It was performed by a Raja whom the rulers of a considerable part of the country had acknowledged as their overlord. The Raja who aspired to be an emperor would let a horse, dedicated to the gods, loose to roam about the country. It was followed by the army of the Raja. All the chiefs and rulers through whose territories the horse chanced to pass had either to acknowledge their allegiance to the Rajah or to fight to capture the horse. If the horse was not captured within a year it was brought back to the capital and sacrificed with great pomp and ceremony.

As far as material life is concerned the Aryans had already been using tin, lead and towards the end of the period iron, the most useful of metals. They had tamed the elephant and used him for riding as well as for the transport of goods. Agriculture had made considerable progress. Fields were manured and irrigated in sundry ways. Many industries

had developed into regular vocations like those of the jeweller, goldsmith, brazier, ironsmith, basket-maker, rope-maker, weaver, dyer, carpenter and potter. Rope-walkers, jugglers, fortune-tellers, flute-players and dancers were also thriving successfully. Trade flourished not only within the country but commercial relations with Mesopotamia, which were interrupted with the fall of the Indus Valley Civilization, had also been resumed. But the remarkable thing is that though there was so much economic progress there is no mention of metal coins in the Vedic literature.

But the greatest progress in this age centred round religious and philosophical thought as seen in the Upanishads. Vedic literature was the preserve of the Brahmins who had so developed their memory as to learn this entire literature by heart and to transmit it orally from generation to generation. There is no evidence to show that writing was common in those days. But what can be reasonably supposed is that some script was imported to India with the resumption of trade relations with Mesopotamia and this script after being modified and adjusted to Indian phonetics developed into the Brahmi script in the Mauryan period.

As we have said before, religion in this period developed in two directions. One was the way of ritual and devotion which satisfied the craving of the Indian mind for winning the favour of higher powers in order to secure physical well-being and spiritual salvation. The other was the way of asceticism and meditation which catered for its love of speculation and for its urge towards the realization of Truth.

The former way was followed by the Aryans in the form of simple sacrifices and prayers. Non-Aryans, on the other hand, put great emphasis on the worship of and devotion to gods. Both these practices were now combined into an elaborate system of sacrifice and worship. Religious rites and prayers assumed great importance in the life of the people. The commentaries on the Vedas known as the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas were in essence complete codes of these rites. The Brahmanas gave detailed ins-

tructions for religious sacrifices and the Aranyakas revealed their philosophical import. Another effect of non-Aryan influences was that the old Aryan gods lost their former importance and new gods of a mixed Aryan and non-Aryan origin became the main objects of devotion. Of these the most prominent were Mahadeva and Vishnu. Mahadeva seems to have combined the characteristic features of the Aryan god Rudra, the Sindh Valley god Shiva, and the South Indian deity Pashupati. The name Vishnu was borrowed from that of an Aryan sun-god but his conception as the creator and preserver of the Universe was purely Indian. Among minor gods the Dravidian Nagaraja and some others were also included in the Pantheon.

The latter way which the Aryan mind adopted in peculiar Indian environment, specially conducive to meditation, was quite new. Though the religion of the Rig Veda itself was not confined to the worship of natural phenomena it had, however, towards the end of the last period seen in the mirror of Nature a reflection of the one God, the creator of Nature. But now the seers of the Vedic Hindu age, building upon the vague hints found in the Rig Veda about the reality of the world, God and man, raised a stately structure of the religious philosophy of Unitism. The unity of God is the basic creed of the Upanishads. But they conceive of God as the Spirit pervading the Universe. They have tried to give their own unitarian interpretation of the belief in many gods and to sacrifices offered to them. The gods they regard as the manifestation of the various qualities of the universal spirit, and sacrifice as the symbol of renunciation and self-denial without which no spiritual progress is possible.

This was the first idea of Unitism which the Indian mind put before the world three thousand years ago. Since that time to that of Hegel, philosophical and religious thought has done a great deal of hair-splitting on the subject. But none of these later expositions is so simple, clear and convincing as that of the Upanishads. That is why consciously or unconsciously the Monistic idea dominated the intellect

and the emotions of the Indian people and exercised a deep influence on their way of thinking as well as on their action.

The Upanishads deal with two basic questions which arise in the human mind as soon as there is in him an awakening of moral and religious consciousness. What is the abiding reality behind the changing world of appearance which I see or feel every day in or outside myself ? What is the real purpose of my life which I should make the final criterion of my conduct ? The first question had been answered by the Rig Veda in its simple, concise way that the abiding reality in man was his true Self (*Atma*) and outside him the Universal Spirit (*Brahma*). The Upanishads now proceed to discourse about *Atma* and *Brahma* so as to facilitate its acceptance by reason.

In Chandogya Upanishad, Prajapati answering Indra's question points out to him the characteristics by which the true Self or *Atma* can be recognized: "The self which is free from sin, old age, death, pain, hunger and thirst, which desires what it should desire and thinks what it should think; that self we must try to know." The Prajapati tests Indra's intelligence by identifying *Atma* first with the body, then with the state of consciousness in a dream and finally with the unconscious state in a dreamless sleep. But Indra rejects all these answers. The body is obviously liable to change and decay and possesses none of the characteristics of the *Atma* mentioned above. The consciousness in a dream is essentially a series of changing states and cannot therefore be the true Self. As for the unconscious state in a dreamless sleep, it has no doubt the negative qualities attributed to *Atma* but none of the positive qualities. So Prajapati gradually makes Indra realize that it is not possible to conceive of *Atma* as the individual self. *Atma* is really the universal consciousness functioning in the consciousness of every individual. It can only be intuitively experienced. No intellectual conception is possible.

As for the second part of the question "What is Brahma?," the Tatriya Upanishad deals with it in the form of a dialogue between a father and his son. The son asks the father to

explain to him the real nature of *Brahma*. The father tells him the following characteristics of *Brahma*. "That from which all beings come; that to which they all return after death. That is *Brahma*." Then he asks the son to think of a subject possessing these attributes. In other words the father and his son are in search of a permanent being or substance which is unchanging in all this flux, the reality behind all these phenomena. The son first of all thinks of matter but finds that it cannot account satisfactorily for the existence of the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. So he identifies *Brahma* with *Pran*, the principle of life but that too does not satisfy him as mere life does not carry with it the consciousness found in man. Then he names the faculty of perception as *Brahma* but when he realizes that reason is higher than perception he moves on to the concept of pure reason. This is the highest conception of reality for the philosopher but it cannot satisfy the mystic because even pure reason involves the duality of subject and object. The Tatriya Upanishad takes the son further on in the search for the unity of reality and identifies *Brahma* with *Ananda* or the state of bliss. This is the final stage of the conception of reality which the human mind can reach. *Ananda* cannot be defined. No quality can be attributed to it. It may be intuitively realized by the mystic but cannot be theoretically conceived by the philosopher. Nevertheless when the mystic wants to communicate his inner experience to others, he has to give a name to the nameless, an expression to the inexpressible. Thus the Upanishad uses the word *Ananda* to bring Absolute Reality nearer to our comprehension. It implies a being blissfully absorbed in its own contemplation. Keeping in view these conceptions of *Atma* and *Brahma* it is possible to understand the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads expressed in the aphorism "Atma is Brahma" or "Thou art It" that is to say the Universal Being which is the reality behind the physical world is the same as Universal consciousness which is the reality behind the human mind.

This is the answer to the first fundamental question posed

by the Upanishads. Now it is easy to answer the second question. The ultimate object of human life and the ultimate norm of human conduct is the realization of the Self automatically leading to the realization of the Universal Spirit.

Here Self does not mean the empirical mind entangled in the maze of needs and desires but the real mind or *Atma*. "Know this that the *Atma* is the master sitting in chariot of the body; reason is the driver, intellect the rein; senses are the horses and objects the road. The harmony of the mind or intellect with the senses is called 'the enjoyer' by the discerning. But he who is without understanding and immature in reason his senses are out of control like wild horses drawing the chariot; while he who has understanding his senses are restrained like well trained horses. The unwise, imprudent and intemperate can never reach the eternal world of the spirit but is caught in the cycle of re-birth. But the wise, prudent, and temperate reaches the other world from which nobody comes back to this world. The perfection of the self requires self-restraint and temperance, keeping carnal desires under the control of reason. The first step to the realization of Truth is to practise self-denial and self-sacrifice instead of self-indulgence. In this way will the mirror of our mind be free from rust and capable of reflecting the real self (*Atma*)."

According to the Upanishads there are four stages in life through which the seeker after Truth has to pass. He has to live first as a Brahmachari (celibate student) then as a Grahasta (householder), as a Vanaprasta (a hermit) and lastly as a Sannyasin (a roving ascetic). The pilgrim who sets out on the journey of life has to acquire, one by one, all values—knowledge, wealth, love, service—but he should regard them as intermediate stages and pass through each with his mind fixed on the final destination and his feet moving on towards it. This destination is the realization of Unity, *moksha* (salvation).

The doctrines of *Karma* and *Sansar* also occupy an important place in the teachings of the Upanishads. *Karma* is

the fundamental law of the moral world. Every act, good or bad, performed by man has an impact on his personality. Conscious acts gradually grow into unconscious habits and become part of his character. Now character in its turn determines action followed by its consequences. This is a vicious circle in which our mind is involved. The only way to get out of it is to elevate the individual mind through renunciation, self-sacrifice and the service of our fellow-beings into the universal mind. At this level man becomes free from the compelling force of *Karma*. The idea of *Sansar* is a logical consequence of the *Karma* combined with that of the immortality of the soul. If the law of *Karma* is inescapable and eternal and if the soul survives after death, then the impact of action on character and of character on action should also continue after death. The process, as the Upanishads conceive it is this: after death every individual soul goes, according to its good or bad conduct in life, to heaven or hell and after a short sojourn there is re-born as a superior or inferior being—man or animal. This process continues to repeat itself. But when the individual frees himself from the limits imposed by finiteness through the realization of the Absolute, he breaks through the vicious circles of *Karma* and *Sansar* and attains *moksha* (salvation). The greatest heritage of the Vedic Hindu age is the idea of unitism in the Upanishads generally known as the philosophy of the Vedanta. Moreover the concepts of the four stages of life, and those of *Karma* and *Sansar* have not only become important parts of the religious faith of the Hindus but have pervaded all Indian poetry and literature.

The impulse given to the religious and moral thinking in India during this period became stronger in the 6th century BC (when a general wave of creative thought submerged the civilized world from China to Greece) and gave birth to various scientific, literary and religious movements. This disturbed for some time the cultural unity of the country but enriched the Indian mind with the profusion and variety of new ideas.

CHAPTER FIVE

NEW CURRENTS
BUDDHISM—JAINISM—SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY—THE GREAT EPICS (600 BC—200 BC)

THE COMMON NATIONAL CULTURE which had developed in the preceding period continued as the main current of cultural life. But during the next eight centuries new currents of religious and philosophical thought sprang up of which Buddhism, Jainism and the six schools of Hindu Philosophy are worth mentioning here. Buddhism brought about such significant change in the life and thought of the people in a large part of the country that it developed into a separate and more or less independent culture—a rival to the main Hindu Culture. From the point of view of cultural history this was a period of conflict in which Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism were struggling to put their stamp on the cultural life of India. Finally it was Hinduism which emerged victorious from the struggle and Buddhism practically disappeared from the country but it left a deep and lasting impression on Indian mind and Indian life.

This period marks the beginning of Indian history in the proper sense of the word. About the preceding period, our knowledge is, at the most, semi-historical, because its only source is the Vedic literature which gives us no more than some glimpses here and there of the social and cultural life of the time. On this scanty data it is difficult to base anything like a full account of the period, specially to place the facts chronologically. But as far as the time under discussion is concerned we have in addition to Hindu, Buddhist and Jain literature another source of information—the writings of the Greeks who had contact with India during this period. The exploitation of the material from all these sources can help, and to some extent has helped, in compiling a more or less authentic historical account.

In the first half of the 6th century the states of Koshala

Magadha and Vats still flourished in the region called Madhyadesh and Bihar, and a new state of Avanti (Malwa) had come into existence. Of these, Magadha was the largest and the most important. By the time Alexander the Great invaded India (326 BC), it had gradually conquered the neighbouring states and grown into a big empire. During the reign of two great rulers of the Maurya dynasty, Chandragupta Maurya and Asoka, the empire expanded till it comprised the whole of India except a small area in the extreme south. Asoka was a Buddhist and a zealous propagator of Buddhism. Under his patronage the new faith flourished as it had never done before. Even after him Magadha continued to be the capital of a big empire till Pushyamitra Sunga defeated the last Maurya ruler (183 BC) and established the Sunga dynasty. The capital was now shifted to Malwa and the empire was reduced to loose knit federation in which the member states paid only a nominal homage to the centre and were constantly engaged in fighting one another. No lasting empire of the stature of the Maurya empire could be established during the period.

Towards the end of the Maurya empire the Greeks, who had been ruling small states in Bactria for a long time, invaded India from the North-West (190 BC) and established their rule over the Sindh valley and the Punjab and raided the neighbouring regions to the east. Once during the reign of Menander the raiders had reached as far as Pataliputra. At first they were known as Yavanas and regarded as foreigners, but were finally assimilated into the Hindu society as Kshatriyas. After the Greeks came the Scythians who were called Sakas in India and set up a state (90 BC) extending over the Punjab and Madhyadesh as far as Mathura. They were followed within a short time by the Pallavas whose name indicated their Persian origin. They became rulers of North Western India being, in their turn, displaced by the Kushans, of the Yu-Chi tribe. The greatest of the Kushan rulers was Kanishka whose empire extended from Central Asia to Benares and beyond. There

is much difference of opinion about the date of the beginning of his rule. But most probably he ascended the throne in AD 78 which marks the commencement of the Saka era. Kanishka had embraced the Buddhist religion. He was the sponsor of a new interpretation of Buddha's teaching and the founding of a new sect called the Mahayana. This was the time when the Gandhara art flourished. In Orissa about a hundred years before Kanishka, the great conqueror Kharavela, a patron of Jainism, had established a big empire, but it did not last long. About the same time the Andhras or Satavahans founded on the ruins of the Mauryan empire an empire of their own which continued for 400 years.

In South India, all this time the Chola empire flourished on the Coromandel Coast, the Chera or Kerala empire in Malabar and the Pandya empire in the southern most corner of the Peninsula which were constantly engaged in bitter fighting against each other.

During these eight hundred years several new movements, religious and intellectual, arose in India creating storm and stress in the minds of the people and there was a danger that the foundation of national unity laid by the Vedic Hindu Culture would be destroyed and the country would be divided into separate cultural zones with nothing common among them. But what really happened was that this ferment proved to be very beneficial and enriched the Indian mind with a wealth of new and profound ideas. Later when attempts were made to bring about a synthesis in the various trends of thought and imposing structure of a new common culture arose on a wider and stronger foundation.

In the later part of the Vedic Hindu period, the religious life of the country had lost its balance. On the one hand popular religion had become a mere set of rites and sacrifices performed with the help of the Brahmins and on the other hand the teachings of the Upanishads had totally rejected all ritual and sacrifice and formulated a new system of Hindu religion based on an idealistic philosophy. This

philosophical religion was interpreted by the higher classes *who had the intellectual capacity to understand it, as an ascetic way of life and they generally lived like ascetics. The caste system had become so rigid that the lower classes of Hindu society were completely cut off from the higher* classes and higher culture. So much so that they were forbidden to read the Vedas.

At this time (563 to 482 BC) came Gautama Buddha who protested against the ritualism of the masses and the asceticism of the higher classes, against racial prejudice and social discrimination. He delivered to the world his message of compassion, love, self-restraint and self-culture. The essence of Buddha's teaching is the sermon he gave in Benares after his Enlightenment :

> Listen ye Bhikshus ! He who wants to renounce worldliness should avoid both excess and undue abstinence. On the one hand he should not be addicted to things which attract the mind merely through passion, specially through carnal desire. That is the low, vain and worthless life of ignorance fit for none but the blind worshippers of the world. On the other hand, he should not be given to self-mortification. That also is painful, ignoble and useless. There is ye Bhikshus a middle path between the the two which the Tathagatha (Buddha) has found. The pursuit of this path opens the eyes and enlightens the mind. This is the way of peace of mind, higher wisdom illumination and *nirvana*.

Buddha looked deep into the human mind and examined the nature of the feeling of pain. He found the roots of the feeling in passions and desires and a sovereign remedy in self-culture, that is, making our thought and action subservient to a higher purpose by following a strict code of moral life, and a regimen of spiritual exercises. The higher purpose of life is the perfect peace of mind to which Buddha gave the name of *nirvana*. He says : "One who attains freedom and peace through the realization of

Truth enjoys perfect repose in his thought, word and action." In the famous Benares sermon the Buddha goes on to speak of his tremendous experience, of the great Truth revealed to him and of the pain of life—what it is, how it is born and how it ceases to be—and of the way of life which should be adopted to get rid of it. Here is the gist of the sermon :

> This, ye Bhikshus, is the great Truth of the right path by following which pain can be got rid of. It is the eightfold path. (1) right belief, (2) right aspirations, (3) right speech, (4) right conduct, (5) right mode of livelihood, (6) rightmindedness, (7) right effort, (8) right rapture.

Buddha showed the way to self-restraint instead of self-mortification to right action instead of inactivity. What he specially emphasized was that giving up worldliness does not mean giving up the love and service of mankind. On the contrary universal love is essential for attaining peace of mind. This law of love he enunciates in the following words :

> Hatred does not cease by meeting hatred with hatred but by meeting it with love. This is its nature. If one wants to live a happy life one should not hate one's enemies. Conquer resentment with love, evil with good, greed with generosity, and falsehood with truth !

Gautama Buddha spent the rest of his life in travelling far and wide to preach his faith and after him his followers showed great zeal in the propagation of Buddhism. Still, during the first hundred years the number of his followers was very small and was confined to Koshala and Magadha. The rise of Buddhism began when Asoka embraced it and did his best to propagate it not only throughout India but also in foreign countries.

But owing to the comparatively rapid spread of Buddhism, its organization could not maintain the compactness and co-

ordination of the earlier days and the Buddhist community was divided into a number of sects. Of these only Hinayana was the orthodox believer in the teachings of the Buddha. Other sects including Mahayana with the greatest number of followers, had considerably deviated from the orthodox line. Mahayana which under the patronage of Kanishka became very popular in India and abroad, believes in gods and regards the Buddha as the greatest of them, and worships them with elaborate ceremonies and rituals. Its emphasis is on devotion, prayer and charity instead of self-restraint and self-culture.

By the end of this period, Buddhism had lost its popularity in India firstly because the various sects wrangled and quarreled among themselves, and secondly because the Buddhist Sangha received munificient donations and the immense wealth which the Bhikshus possessed, made them live a life of luxury and lead to their moral degeneration.

About the same time as the Buddha was propagating his faith Mahavira (552—480 BC) was preaching a new religion which came to be known as Jainism. The gist of his teaching was that if a man is overcome by violent passions such as anger, self-conceit, greed or blind love, his soul is permeated by matter which binds it with fetters. Its liberation requires that no more matter be allowed to contaminate the soul and that which has already entered it should be completely eliminated.

There are three principles known as three jewels (*triratna*) which should be followed to purge the soul of matter: right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. "Right knowledge consists in a correct understanding of the teachings of omniscient *tirthankaras* (makers of sacred paths). Right faith is the firm belief in the infallibility and competence of the teachers and right conduct consists of strict observance of charity, chastity, renunciation of all worldy interests, honourable conduct like not stealing, not uttering falsehood, and *ahimsa* or non-injury which implies not only the negative act of abstention from all injury to life but positive kindness to all creation."

The Jains share with the Hindus the belief that the chain of *Karma* can be broken by vigorous ascetic discipline and advocate self-mortification, even suicide. The man who faithfully observes the principles known as the *triratna* becomes an *arhat* (a perfect one) and attains absolute knowledge and eternal bliss. The Jains do not believe in gods but their idea of an *arhat* is more or less the same as that of a god in Hinduism. They do not, however, regard the *arhats* as objects of devotion but as models of perfection. "They (the *arhats*) do not respond to prayers or lend a helping hand to the struggling spiritual aspirants and the best way of worshipping them is to follow their example and advice."

Like Buddhism, Jainism flourished for some time and then began to decline. But it was not totally uprooted from India as it had tried to assimilate itself with Hinduism in many respects and came to be regarded as one of its heterodox sects.

The challenge of Buddhism and Jainism to the Vedic Hindu religion was a stimulating and refreshing inspiration to the minds of Hindu thinkers who now left the beaten track and ventured on new paths of speculation and reasoning.

Orthodox Hindus were still following the line laid down by the Vedas. Their practical religious life consisted of (*a*) the numerous rites and sacrifices performed under the direction of the Brahmins and (*b*) the duties prescribed for their particular caste under the caste system (*varnashram*). For the performance of religious rites and duties, at first the *sutras*, or gists of the commentaries on the Vedas written in short pithy sentences, served as guides. But later these brief hints were amplified in *Dharmashastras*, or elaborate codes of ritual, prayer and moral conduct prepared in the light of the teaching of the Vedas. A separate manual of politics and economics the *Arthashastra*, said to have been written by Chanakya or Kautilya, the minister of Chandra Gupta Maurya was an achievement in the field of government and political institutions. The best known

Dharmashastra is *Manusmriti* compiled by Manu, probably during the reign of the Sunga dynasty between 200 and 100 BC.

Besides, philosophical thinkers made their own original speculations on metaphysical problems and founded their own systems known as the six systems of Hindu Philosophy. Four of these, Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisheshika were not influenced by the Vedas. But Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa were based on the teachings of the Upanishads.

Sankhya philosophy, like the Upanishads, rejects the rites and sacrifices introduced by the Brahmins and looks for some other way to the peace of mind and salvation. It regards both the body and the soul as real and does not believe in a universal being or God. According to it the soul, as long as it is associated to the body, is subject to passions and desires and afflicted with pain. Even after death the soul is not free but caught in the cycle of rebirth with the body. But if one realizes the true nature of the body and the soul one casts off the body and is free from pain.

Sankhya has a fairly high place in philosophical thought and contains valuable contributions to psychology and to the theory of knowledge. But as a code of life it could not make much progress as it had not shown a way to salvation which the common people could follow. This deficiency was made up later by Patanjali's Yoga.

From the theoretical point of view Patanjali's Yoga has no independent status but is the practical sequel to Sankhya philosophy. All ideas about psychology and theory of knowledge found in Patanjali are taken from the Sankhya philosophy. His aim like that of the Sankhya is that the human soul should free itself from the bonds of nature, from its own body, from *Karma* and *Sansar* and attain the realization of Truth and the state of absolute peace of mind which he calls the Yoga. This can be attained by means of prayer and spiritual exercise. Prayer means devotion to the Highest Soul which is free from corporality,

Karma and *Sansar*, and spiritual exercise means eschewing passion and desire through absorbing meditation and the holding of one's breath for long spells. In the course of this spiritual training there comes a stage when the *Yogi* acquires supernatural powers. He can find out all about the earth and the sky, the past and the future ; he can make himself invisible ; he can fly in the air and walk on water. But that is not what he is after. His object is to achieve complete detachment, perfect peace.

The Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems also pursue what may be called the common end of all Indian philosophical systems—the attainment of salvation through Truth or the knowledge of Reality. But in those two systems knowledge does not mean intuitive but scientific knowledge based on observation, reasoning and experiment. Nyaya deals with *Pramana* and *Pramayya*, i. e. proof and that which is to be proved. The former comprises problems of logic and theory of knowledge and the latter physics. In all these sciences the Indian mind had achieved, about 2500 years ago, a profoundness and precision of thought of which there is no other example except in ancient Greece.

The remaining two systems of Hindu philosophy, i. e. Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa differ from the above four in that they derive their inspiration from the teachings of the Vedas. Purva Mimamsa believes that the Vedas are revealed and their injunctions must be obeyed. But it does not concern itself either with the theology or the ethics of the Vedas but only with the verses dealing with rites and ceremonies, sacrifices, hymns and prayers. This onesided trend was probably a reaction against the religious philosophy of the time which had totally rejected all ritual and prayer. While Purva Mimamsa has stressed one aspect of the teachings of the Vedas, Uttara Mimamsa has put emphasis on the other aspect, that is on the doctrine of unitism which it has developed into a coherent philcsosophy. Together, these two schools represent a religious philosophy which aims at vindicating the Vedic Hindu religion against Buddhism on the one hand and Jainism on the other.

But the highest achievement of the Hindu mind in this age shows itself in another philosophy expounded in Bhagwad Gita. The Gita is not a separate book but a part of the epic Mahabharata.

There is an episode in the famous epic that Sri Krishna has come down to the earth in the garb of a charioteer to help the hero Arjuna and is driving his chariot. Just as the fight is about to start Arjuna finds himself in a moral dilemma. He asks himself if it is not a sin to bring destruction on God's creatures and to slay his own kith and kin. On the one hand, the Kshatriya *dharma* urges him to do his duty and fight in order to uphold truth and justice, and on the other hand, love and fellow-feeling demand that he should not strike against his own brethren. So he is in great distress and does not know what to do. Sri Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, disguised as Arjuna's charioteer observes his spiritual predicament and comes to his rescue.

Arjuna's trouble is that his moral duty urges him to act but the consequences of this action seem to be entirely immoral. Sri Krishna resolves this difficulty on the basis of the philosophy of the Upanishads and so he has to explain the fundamental principles of this philosophy. The gist of his argument is that to find the right way to moral action it is essential to base morality on religion. Every individual act has to be judged by the standards which religion has laid down. The religious ideal according to the Upanishads is the realization of the unity of Being. It is not mere knowledge but complete absorption in the contemplation of *Brahma* till the illusion of duality is removed and the seeker and the sought become one. At this stage the whole nature of one's action changes. One performs the functions necessary for the preservation of one's own self and of society merely for duty's sake without any consideration for one's personal desire or the consequences of one's action. To Arjuna Sri Krishna's advice is that he should discharge the duties laid down on him by the Kshatriya caste in a state of spiritual detachment without being swayed by desire, and not to have the slightest concern with the conse-

quences of his action. He should in fact get rid of the feeling that he is acting at all and regard all that is being done as the work of *Brahma*, the Real Agent. He should realize that his own action, like his existence as an individual, is mere appearance, a mere name.

Bhagwad Gita is not only a commentary on but a supplement to the Upanishads. In the Upanishads the emphasis is on the theoretical aspect of religion, that is on the nature of *Brahma* and *Atma* and their identity; in the Gita on the practical approach that is on the way of the realization of *Brahma* and the attainment of salvation. The Gita has tried to make a synthesis of three ways of attaining salvation—the way of Knowledge through speculation and ascetic discipline, the way of Faith and Devotion, and the way of Action. All the three have been mentioned in the Upanishads but so much stress has been laid on pure knowledge that the devotional aspect of religion is lost sight of and it looks as if realization of the Truth is something purely intellectual with no scope for love or devotion. Similarly, action is ranked inferior to knowledge. Apparently the Upanishads regard action of any kind as a chain impeding the progress of the seeker of Truth which has to be broken before knowledge and salvation can be attained. The Gita has removed these misunderstandings and made it quite clear that the realization of *Atma* and *Brahma* emphasized in the Upanishads is not mere abstract thought but a spiritual merging of the seeker into the sought involving love and devotion, and that action performed solely from a sense of duty is not an impediment but an effective means to this end.

Hindu thinkers seemed to be trying to reform Hinduism so as to invest it with the moral and spiritual strength to hold its own against Buddhism and regain the status of national religion. This movement was not confined to religion and philosophy alone but penetrated below the intellectual level into the depths of feeling expressing itself in epic or heroic poetry. The stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana told in various folk-songs, had been current

among the people for many generations. About the middle of this period in the 2nd century BC they were compiled and re-edited so that the memorable deeds of the heroes of the Vedic Hindu age may remind the people of their great past and stir in their minds the desire for a new and better life. Strictly speaking Ramayana is not a religious poem but may be regarded as the first specimen of secular poetry. But it presents the lofty characters of Rama, Lakshman and Sita in such an attractive and effective way that the readers are inspired with the deepest religious sentiments of love and devotion, and to them it is no less sacred than the holy books of the Hindu religion. On the other hand the Mahabharata is, according to ancient tradition, a continuation of the Yajur Veda and calls itself the fifth Veda as well as a Dharma Shastra. Religious significance, however, is attributed not to the story of Kurus and Pandavas but to those portions of Mahabharata which deal with philosophical problems, specially to the famous discourse of Sri Krishna called the Bhagwad Gita to which we have referred above.

Against this background of religious thought we have to look at the various aspects of the culture of an age in which religion was not merely a part of life but dominated the whole of it. Social and political organizations, sciences, fine arts, mode of living, food and dress—everything was cast in the mould of religion.

Though the state was an autocratic one and in matters of administration the will of the Raja was law, yet in judicial matters he had to follow the Dharma Shastra. Generally Brahmins who were known for their learning and piety were employed as advisers to the Raja and had a considerable say in matters of state. So it can be said that the state was to some extent subordinate to religion. But with the Buddhist state, at least in Asoka's time, the case was quite the reverse. The Raja had come to be regarded as the religious head of the Buddhists. The Hindus enjoyed complete freedom of faith and worship. But as far as moral life was concerned the state maintained a strict censorship over all its citizens—Hindus as well as Buddhists

—and special officers called Dhamma Mahamatras were appointed for the purpose. Apart from this the general pattern of the state was the same as under Buddhist and Hindu rules and its most prominent feature was that the Raja ruled through a bureaucracy and an executive no less elaborate than we find in a modern state.

The change which Buddhism brought about in the social system was that, though caste distinctions did not disappear, yet they became less important.

The Buddhist Sangha opened its doors to all castes and thus the religious basis of *varnashram* was weakened. In general social life the hierarchy of the caste system persisted even among the Buddhists and the Jains, but the order of gradation was changed to some extent. The nobles who belonged to the Kshatriya and the traders who belonged the Vaishya castes were now regarded superior to the Brahmins.

Another important effect of the Buddhist movement was that animal sacrifice, which Asoka had stopped during his reign, was given up for ever by the great bulk of Hindu society. Only a small section of population like the worshippers of Kali continued to observe it. The part played by Jainism in putting an end to animal sacrifice and meat-eating as well as in propagating the doctrine of *ahimsa* was no less important than that of Buddhism.

The few sciences which were cultivated at this time had their roots in religion. Philosophy, as we have seen, was intimately connected with religion. Orthography, Grammar and Prosody had developed in the course of the study of the Vedas and were regarded as parts of the Vedic lore. The old Indo-Aryan language, generally known as Vedic, was considerably changed and divided into several branches. One of these, current in the middle regions of North India, had developed on a logical pattern and was called Sanskrit. As the language of Hindu religion and philosophy it was studied by the upper classes throughout India. Astrology which had begun from the study of the movements of stars for determining the time of religious rites and sacrifices, was the special preserve of Brahmins.

Buddhism exercised a great influence on education during this age. Before the Buddha the language of science and religion was Sanskrit. All the holy books were either in Vedic or in Sanskrit and could be studied by none except the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. Education, therefore, was confined exclusively to these high castes. Buddha adopted for the propagation of his message the language of common intercourse instead of Sanskrit. In those days the language spoken in the homeland of the Buddha was the eastern dialect of Indo-Aryan. It was in this dialect that the Buddha preached. By the time of Asoka it had become the religious language of the Buddhists, and spread along with Buddhism throughout India. That is why Asoka used it in his edicts carved on pillars in different parts of the country. As far as knowledge is concerned the Buddhists generally confined themselves to the study of religious lore. The field of learning continued to be under the sway of the Brahmins throughout the period. So the various systems of philosophy, religious law, political economy and the masterpieces of epic poetry, to which we have referred above, were all works of Brahmin thinkers.

On the other hand, art flourished under Buddhist patronage. In the pre-Buddhist period fine arts were in a primitive stage. Architecture too, had made little progress. Houses of one to four storeys were built of wood in cities situated on river-bank or sea-coast and of bricks in those on a higher altitude. They were provided with a large number of windows. Straw and bricks were used for ceilings. Each house had, as a rule, a square courtyard surrounded on all sides by rooms with verandas in front. The cities were generally planned in the form of a square or a rectangle. The main street ran from east to west, side streets from north to south. A separate quarter was set apart for each of the various vocational groups. Temples were situated in the northern part of the city and in each of them there was a chamber of bamboo lattice-work which served as an altar. Even in cities where bricks were used for building houses, temples were generally made of bamboo.

The oldest temple which has so far been traced is the Vishnu temple near Chittor. Another belonging to the same period has been found in Bes Nagar.

The use of stone in buildings had begun a little before Asoka's time. But it was he who made stone structures on a large scale. Of these, royal palaces have been destroyed by ravages of time. But some *stupas*, pillars and *viharas* (monasteries) are still extant. Specimens of *stupas* can be seen in Sanchi and Barhut. The carvings on their fences and gates deal not with religious but with secular subjects, and present vivid pictures of life in that period. The Asoka pillars cut out of single pieces of solid stone are from 40 to 50 feet high with a polished surface shining like a mirror. In the upper part there are on a square base, a bell-shaped crenate capital and some particular symbolic figures generally that of a lion. The most famous of them is the pillar in Sarnath near Benares with four stately lion-figures bearing the *dharmachakra*. It is these lions and the sacred wheel that have been adopted as the official emblem of the Indian Republic.

"The flower of Buddhist art is seen in the caves of Ajanta and their frescoes. These paintings executed from the second century BC to the third century AD present the characteristics of the Buddhist art at its best. The first thing to be noticed is that from the point of view of artistic skill and technical perfection, the Ajanta painting had reached such a high standard that it must be regarded as the result of development over centuries. This can only be explained by linking the Ajanta art through the Dravidian culture of South India, to the Sind Valley Civilization because the Vedic culture which was the precursor of the Buddhist culture in North India, is not known to have had any painting worth the name.

" This hypothesis would account for the fact that these frescoes give as prominent a place to non-Aryan figures like the Nagars, as to the Aryan ones. Another characteristic of these paintings, as of all Buddhist art, is simplicity and restraint that is the avoidance of elaborate decoration

and ornamentation as well as that of excessive emotion, which can be regarded as the direct influence of Buddha's teachings. At the same time the charming Bodhisatva Padampani shows that Buddhist art combined with a deep spirituality and inwardness the capacity to take delight in physical beauty and grace."

CHAPTER SIX

THE SECOND CONFLUENCE PURANIC HINDU CULTURE

(AD 200—AD 700)

IN THE foregoing period two new religious movements arose as rivals to the orthodox Hindu religion and were for some time very popular in certain parts of the country. But by the second century BC their influence began to decline. On the other hand, Hindu thinkers in search of truth, ventured on new ways of speculation and made a careful study of the spiritual temper of their countrymen with a view to reform religious faith and pratice in a manner calculated to attract all classes of people. The result was that Hinduism, with a fresh lease of life and vigour, regained its hold over the people and served as the foundation of a new national culture. This new culture which had begun to develop about 200 BC reached its highest level in the fourth century under the Gupta emperors.

Though several empires emerged in north and south India after that of the Mauryas, none of them was big enough to deserve the name of the national empire. Finally in the beginning of the fourth century AD another Chandragupta (AD 320 to AD 335) arose from the land which had given birth to the founder of the Maurya empire and made Pataliputra the capital of another fairly big empire which under his son Samudragupta and his grandson Chandragupta II held the whole of India, except a small part of the south, under its sway. The political unity enjoyed by the country under the Guptas, helped in creating an atmosphere of cultural unity and in elevating the new Hindu culture to the position of the national culture. In the following pages we will try to give a brief survey of this new culture.

The Vedic Hindu religion had already included Shiva and Vishnu, the most popular gods of old Indian people,

among the Vedic pantheon, identifying Shiva with the Aryan god Rudra and Vishnu with Surya. But belief in these gods was only a minor point in the Vedic Hindu creed and was not fully assimilated in it. The new form of Hinduism realized the full importance of this old belief and after reconciling it with unitarianism, made it an essential part of its religious faith.

The religious consciousness of the old Indian people was still in a stage where they regarded the various forces of nature as living gods and goddesses possessing will and power. They visualized them in human form, and made their images and worshipped them. Their powerful and unrestrained imagination had conceived the origin and growth of the universe and the relations between the various natural phenomena in the form of myths about gods. In some parts of the country the greatest homage was paid to the god of reproduction, Shiva and his consort Parvati who was probably the same as the mother-goddess worshipped several thousand years earlier in the valley of Sindh. In other parts Vishnu the god of livelihood and his wife Lakshmi were the special objects of veneration. As sexual reproduction is the root of life as well as of death, Shiva was believed to have a dual personality. On one side he was regarded as the ruler of the universe, and on the other, as its destroyer. Similarly, his consort was regarded as a gracious mother under the names of Uma and Parvati and as a ferocious power under the name of Kali whom nothing could appease except a blood sacrifice. But Vishnu had only one aspect. He was the preserver of the world, merciful towards men and provider of their welfare. His wife Lakshmi was the goddess of wealth and plenty.

The idea of the multiplicity of gods was reconciled with the Vedic concept of unity with the help of the theory of symbol and incarnation. The religious dogma took the following form. The living soul of the universe is the one and only being called Brahma. We can conceive him in three ways as Brahma, the creator, as Vishnu, the preserver and as Shiva, the destroyer. All these three as well as

other gods and goddesses and their representations are the the symbols of the various modes and qualities of the one God and to worship them means really to worship Brahma. Vishnu comes to the world again and again for the help and salvation of men.

The human form assumed by a god is called his incarnation. Nine incarnations of Vishnu have already come, the most important of them being Krishna, Rama, and the Buddha.

After revising the belief in gods in such a way as to accommodate all sects and all classes, the stories current among the people about the creation of the world, the life of gods and the rule of kings were collected and compiled under the title of Puranas. Most of the Puranas are named after Vishnu and some after Brahma or Shiva. Such compilations were known to the Hindus from the earliest times. Ithihasa Purana is mentioned in Atharva Veda and is regarded by some as a part of the Vedic literature. But most of the Puranas were compiled in their present form in the fifth century AD and in the following centuries, as the new Hindu religion raised them to the status of holy books. The Puranas were far more popular among the common people than the Vedas. So new Hinduism, in order to distinguish it from the old can be called the Puranic Hindu religion and the culture founded upon it as the Puranic culture.

The Puranic Hindu religion had, as we have said before an outlook broad enough to accommodate all varieties of belief existing in India, from animism and image-worship to unitism. But those religious doctrines which were directly concerned with social and moral life, i.e. Karma, Punarjanma, the four stages of life and Varnashrama were taken bodily from the Vedic Hindu religion.

Another thing common to both was that the interpretation of the Vedas and Aranyakas and of the laws laid down in Dharma Shastras, as well as the direction of the elaborate rites which a Hindu had to perform from birth to death, was the privilege of the Brahmins. So they had comp-

lete control over the religious and social life of the people.

Under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism belief in *ahimsa* became a tenet of Hindu religion. Animal sacrifices were stopped and the cow began to be revered as a symbol of all living creatures.

So the founders of the Puranic Hindu religion, who had an understanding of the conditions of their time and an insight into the Indian mind, instead of making the Hindu religion a closed and rigid system, made it so elastic as to accomodate all the religious trends of that age. Equally broad-based and comprehensive was the culture built on this foundation. But inspite of all this caste distinctions became more rigid because in this loose structure of Puranic religion and culture, the real binding force was provided by the Brahmins and their power and influence depended on the caste system. With all their influence over religious and social life, the Brahmins had no hand in administration or government. As *purohits* their only duty was to preside over the observance of religious life. So the Hindu state, though still a religious state in the sense that it was its duty to patronize Hindu religions and to enforce the religious laws, was practically free from the interference of the religious class and the process of its secularization had begun. Though the Dharma Shastras had the status of civil and social laws yet since the time of Manu human reason and social custom were also recognized as sources of law. The state, therefore, had the right of making secular laws and it followed the principle that, along with the common cultural and social life which Hindu religion wanted to promote throughout the country, the various regional cultures and social institutions should also be recognized and given the same legal status as Hindu culture.

Inter-marriage between castes had produced various new mixed sub-castes. Even the four original castes were now being divided into smaller groups. Specially the Vaishya caste had split on the occupational basis into many sub-castes like Vaidya, Kayastha, etc.

Women had a high status in society but they were not allowed to step outside their prescribed range of duties.

A brief survey of different cultures shows the general conditions created by the Puranic Hindu religion. But we must remember that in some parts of the country specially in South India, there were large groups who even after adopting the religious tenets of Puranic Hinduism stuck to their own cultures—each with a separate language and to some extent separate way of living, separate customs, manners and laws. So much so that in the South some Dravidian communities lived under a matriarchal system radically different from the patriarchal system of Hindu religion.

Though in the Puranic age religion continued to dominate society, the process of differentiation of the various departments of life became more pronounced. Science, literature and fine arts were now free to move outside the narrow circle of religious subjects and to deal with all departments of life. Thanks to the patronage of the Gupta court, secular literature made remarkable progress so that it could compare favourably with classical literature of any other language of the world.

The progress of science and literature was accelerated by the increasing use of books. For centuries India had known the art of writing in Kharoshti and Brahmi scripts. In North India the barks of some trees and in South India palm leaves of various kinds were used for writing.

Sanskrit had regained its position of the language of religion, science and literature. For higher learning there were universities in Nalanda and other places in which students were given religious and secular education at the expense of the state. Among secular sciences medicine, mathematics and astronomy were regarded to be the most important in this period. Along with medicine students also learnt surgery. They were taught to use the lancet for surgical operations to clean and dry the wounds and to apply salve. The mathematicians of the age were familiar with the Pythagorean theorem, could find the

value of π and solve problems of simple equations. The astronomers had discovered that the stars and planets were round and reflected light. They knew that the earth turned round its axis once in a day and they had calculated its radius.

The great scholars of this period occupy a high place in the history of science not only of India but of the whole world. The researches of Arya Bhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta in mathematics and astronomy, of Charaka and Susruta in medicine, guided scientists in other lands for centuries and exercised a direct influence on scientific thought on Arab and other Islamic countries and indirectly on Europe.

The branch of literature which made the most remarkable progress during this period was drama. Bhasa was probably the first dramatist to distinguish himself in the field of court drama or secular drama. He was the predecessor of Kalidasa who lived in the fourth or the fifth century BC. Kalidasa is unanimously acknowledged to be the king of Indian dramatists and poets. There is a difference of opinion about his birth-place but all agree that he passed the greater part of his life at the court of the Gupta Rajas. The best known and the most highly esteemed of his dramatic works is Shakuntala which is regarded to be a mirror of the mixed classic—romantic spirit of the Puranic period. The poetry and drama of this period retained something of the realistic simplicity of the purely classical poetry of Ramayana and Mahabharata but at the same time the powerful imagination and passionate sensuousness of the age invested it with a lyrical romanticism. At the end of the seventh century appeared another great dramatist, Bhavabhuti whom literary critics place in the same class with Kalidasa. His three plays Malatimadhava, Mahavira-charita and Uttararamacharita are regarded to be the last memorable works of the golden age of Sanskrit literature.

In epic poetry, as in drama the Indian mind reached the heights of perfection during this period. For that also the credit goes to Kalidasa. His two epics Raghuvamsa and

Kumarsambhava and the little lyrical poem Meghaduta, are counted among the masterpieces of world literature. Bharavi was almost a contemporary of Kalidasa. Only one epic of his Kiratarjunia has come down to us but it is regarded to be the most powerful poem in the Sanskrit language. In the seventh century Bhartr Hari, the court poet of Harsha was unrivalled in his own field. He is famous for the little gems of poetry called the *shatakas* which show great depth of conception and artistic skill.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NEW WINDS AND NEW CURRENTS

Islam in the South-Advaita-Bhakti-Rajput Culture
(AD 700—AD 1000)

THE THREE hundred years after Harsha were a period of political disintegration and intellectual stagnation. The whole country was divided into numerous tiny states which had limited the view of the people living in them to their own little worlds and the sense of national unity was almost completely lost. Religious and intellectual life was dominated by formalism and authoritarianism. The two sects of the Puranic Hinduism worshipping Shiva and Vishnu had developed into two separate religions. Religious consciousness was there in abundance but it had no freshness or depth. Writings on religion were confined to supplements to the Puranas or duplications of the old *smritis*. The ideas were marred by blind imitation of thinkers of the past and the manner of writing cramped by strict adherence to hard and fast rules of grammer and rhetoric. "This was also true of drama, poetry and other branches of literature. All the juice was pressed out of them by rigours of technique." Far greater than creative literature was the bulk of books on prosody and the technique of writing and commentaries on old works were written in large numbers in strict accordance with the elaborate rules laid down for the commentators.

This degeneration dates from the time when the invading Shakas, Hunas and Gurjars put an end to the Gupta empire and settled in India. By the end of the eleventh century these adventurous warlike tribes, full of freshness and vigour, had spread throughout India and set up many small states of their own on the ruins of the older and larger ones. But it seems that shortly after these nomads came to India, they were attracted by the superior cultural life they

found here and gradually adopted Hindu religion and culture. In order to acquire a higher status in Hindu society they claimed to be the descendents of old Kshatriya heroes and began to call themselves Rajputs.

These Rajputs infused fresh blood into the enervated body of Hindu society and created a new stir and movement in its stagnant intellectual and cultural life. The Rajput courts became centres of art, literature, poetry and drama. Specially Raja Bhoj of Malwa (AD 1018—1055) known as the second Vikramaditya revived the memory of the Gupta emperors through his patronage of art and learning. Before him Raja Mahindrapal of Kanauj was the patron of the noted dramatist Shekhar. Towards the end of the period Raja Lakshman Sen of Bengal distinguished himself for his promotion of poetry and literature as the patron of Jaydeva the author of *Gita Govinda.*

In the eleventh century this movement of the renaissance of learning and literature reached Kashmir. Somdeva translated an old collection of South Indian tales into Sanskrit under the title of *Katha Sarit Sagara* and Kulhana wrote his *Rajtarangani*, a history of Kashmir in verse which is regarded as an outstanding work of literature as well as history. Later, when Sanskrit lost its hold over the minds of the people and the regional languages began to attract attention, they received great encouragement in the Rajput court. So the first book of poetry in Dingal Hindi, "Prithvi Raj Rasu" was written at the instance of the Chauhan Raja of Ajmer. It is popularly believed to be the work of his court poet Chandra Bardai but some scholars think that it is a collection of songs composed by different bards. Architecture too, made great progress under the Rajputs. The forts of Chittor, Ranthambor, Mandu and Gwalior and the temples in Khajurahu (Bundelkhand) and Bhuvaneshwar bear witness to their glory. But the culture which flourished during the Rajput period was the culture of a warlike people in an age of chivalry. From the individual point of view it appears to be full of romance and poetry but from the point of view of national unity and

collective welfare it presents a depressing picture. So obsessed were the Rajputs with tribal consciousness that they seemed to have lost even a sense of solidarity of class or caste to say nothing of the sense of national unity. A similar spirit pervaded the whole society. Each of the four castes was now divided into many sub-castes which claimed the entire loyalty of the individual. The very idea of nationhood had completely disappeared.

South India during this time remained free both from the evils of over-civilization and from the disastrous effects of foreign invasions. It, therefore, did not fall a prey to political disintegration like the North. In the beginning of this period the vast peninsula comprised the states of Kerala and Pandya which enjoyed political stability throughout these three centuries. At the end of this period there was, however, a change but it was a change for the better because it turned South India into one political unit. In AD 1005 the Chola ruler Rajaraja made himself master of almost the whole peninsula and his navy conquered Ceylon. His son Rajendra Chola further increased his dominions by annexing the region along the Bay of Bengal.

Favourable conditions in the South saved intellectual life from the stagnation which had come over it in the North. Here the period is marked by a remarkable movement and activity in religious thought. In seventh century AD two orders of Shivite and Vishnuite saints had rendered the teaching of the Puranas, quickened by the zeal of their religious passion, into Tamil verse to propagate a cult of love and devotion which was later called *Bhakti*. Of these mystic poets the votaries of Shiva were known as Adyars and those of Vishnu as Alwars. The Alwars played an important role in making the Hindu religion a living experience for the common people in the South. Their ideas were mostly taken from the Vishnu Purana, Bhagwad Gita and other books of sacred Hindu literature. Their profound passion and poetic genius gave Vishnu Bhakti the status of an independent religion which had far greater

attraction for the common people than its rivals Shaivism, Buddhism and Jainism. Another great religious movement which arose in the South was that of Shankaracharya who revived the Vedantic religion through his Commentary on the Uttara Mimamsa. The gist of his teaching was that all the holy books of the Hindus express the same truth, i.e. the creed of unitism in different ways. According to Shankaracharya, God is the one and only being. Nothing exists except Him. He is *nirguna*, i.e. free from all attributes. All, except God, that appears to exist is mere illusion (*maya*). As long as man suffers from ignorance, he has to believe that the world of appearance (*maya*) is real and to act in practical life according to this hypothesis. But for the one who knows and wants to attain ultimate salvation (*Moksha*) it is necessary to lift the veil of ignorance and have a vision of real unity which he cannot do until he has, through a course of spiritual exercises suspended his senses and perception and put himself in a state of trance.

Shankaracharya's philosophy which is known as *Advaita* is a well-reasoned and complete interpretation of the real Hindu way, that is the way of knowledge. The way of devotion or *Bhakti yoga* was represented during the lifetime of Shankaracharya by the Alwar and Adyar poets. Later, in the 10th and 11th centuries several Shivite and Vishnuite *acharyas* tried to put the idea of Bhakti on a philosophical basis. Of these we will mention Ramanuja who raised the cult of Bhakti to the level of an independent religion and helped it to conquer the minds of the people throughout India from the South to the North.

Ramanuja based his teaching like Shankaracharya on the Vedanta, the philosophy of the Upanishads. But he interpreted it in an entirely different way. He too believes God to be the one and only being but he invests Him with attributes. God is the master of all (Iswara) and the supreme soul (Purshottam). He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He created out of Himself matter (*prakriti*) and spirit (*jiva*) but it did not make the least difference to the integrity of his being. Matter and spirit

have both a degree of reality but their existence is not independent of God. They are merely accidents of His being and subservient to His will. The human soul after passing through the intermediate stages of action (*karma*) and knowledge (*jnana*) reaches the ultimate stage of being in the presence of the beloved and attains *Moksha*.

The way of *Advaita* shown by Shankaracharya and that of *Bhakti* initiated by the Alwar poets appear to be new movements in the religious history of India. When we consider the origins of these movements we find that they were based on old religious ideas which the changing social and political conditions helped to revive. In explaining why this revival took place in South India at this particular time, one has to accept the hypothesis that it was partly due to some foreign cultural influence. Some historians think this foreign influence was of the Nestorian Christianity which had prevailed in South India for a long time. But Dr. Tarachand in his valuable book *The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* has proved that these movements were inspired by the impact of Islam. The contact of Muslim Arabs with South India had already begun in the later part of the preceding period. Trade relations between Arabia and South India had existed for many centuries before the emergence of Islam. But in the 7th century when Islam infused the Arabs with a new spirit of adventure and enterprise, their foreign trade increased by leaps and bounds and the conquest of Iran gave them the monopoly of Indo-Iranian maritime trade. Soon they had their settlements in Ceylon and on the coast of Malabar. Since they had come as peaceful traders they were welcomed by the Hindu Rajas and their subjects, and were given full freedom not only to profess and practise their religion but also to preach and propagate it and they made full use of their freedom. No wonder that their zeal rekindled in the minds of their Hindu neighbours the dormant divine fire and caused a stir in their religious life. The *Bhakti* movement, beginning with the mystic poets and culminating in the philosophy of Ramanuja, and the revival

of Vedanta brought about by Shankaracharya were both to a great extent due to the general religious awakening caused by the impact of Islam.

About the same time Arab Muslims came to Sind and established their rule over the region. In the beginning of the 8th century AD the ruler of Ceylon sent the orphan daughters of some immigrant Arabs who had died to Hajjaj Ibn-e-Yusuf, governor of Hedjaz. The ships on which they were sailing were attacked by some pirates from Cutch who seized the girls and took them way. Hajjaj urged upon "Dahar", the Raja of Sind to set the captives free. But the latter ignored it. It was to punish him for this negligence that an expedition was sent in AD 712. It was Mohammad-ibne-Qasim who conquered Sind and Multan and annexed them to the Islamic Khilafat.

Sind acknowledged the suzerainty of the Khilafat till AD 861. After that several small independent states were set up under Muslim rulers. Outside Muslim territory a large number of Arab traders had settled in Hindu states on the coastal region from Sindh to Gujerat and Kathiawar.

We know something about the influence which the contact of Hindus and Muslims in Western India had on the Muslim culture in Arabia. We know that during the reign of Khalifa Mansur (AD 757—AD 774) Hindu scholars came to Baghdad and brought with them Brahmagupta's *Brahamasiddhanta* and *Khandkhadayaka* which Al-fazari translated into Arabic with the help of these Pundits. Later in the time of Harun thanks to the liberalism and generosity of his Barmecide ministers many books were translated from Sanskrit into Arabic. The Barmecides sent Arab scholars to India to study medicine and called Hindu physicians to Baghdad to act as superintendents of hospitals and to translate a number of books on medicine, philosophy, astronomy and astrology into Arabic. Al-Fihrist mentions a philosophical work by Bedba. This, according to Professor Sachau, was the Vedanta Sutra of Badarayana Vyasa. As long as Sindh was under the Abbasides the work of translation from Arabic into Sanskrit continued.

but the cultural influence exercised by the Muslims over
dh and Gujerat during this period has not yet fully come
light. In any case, Muslim influence on Indian culture
he South and the West was limited and indirect. It was
he North, where the long series of invasions by Muslim
ks started in the 10th century and continued till the
ablishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of
13th century, that Muslim Culture had a profound and
ect influence on every department of Indian life. In the
t chapter we shall see where this Muslim Culture had its
gin, how it came to India and what role it played in
shaping of the cultural life of the country.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MUSLIM CULTURE BEFORE IT CAME TO INDIA

Islam as the Basis of Muslim Culture

THE BIRTH PLACE of Islam, Arabia, is a part of the bigger geographical region which is almost entirely surrounded by the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean. This region occupied a central position in the old world and was the meeting point of three continents. It was here that several great cultures arose and others born in Asia, or Africa or Europe came into contact with one another. During the period when the whole trade between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean was carried by a land route, Syria, Palestine, Hedjaz and Yemen lay on this great road joining the East with the West. If there was a place in the old world where the idea of a universal human brotherhood could take shape it was this central region.

Islam, the new message of hope and faith which the Prophet of Arabia gave to the world, does not claim to be a new religion. It sets out merely to reiterate in a more complete form the eternal truth which the chosen messengers of God have been revealing to various peoples of the world from time to time. To explain this point the Quran uses the terms "Din" and "Shariah". "Din" is the religious and moral ideal common to all religions of which the Semitic religions are explicitly named, others being referred to by implication. "Shariah" is the positive law through which a particular religion realises at a given time the common eternal ideal. "Din" has always been the same and will continue to be the same. But "Shariahs" have been different for different peoples at different times. Islam as "Din" recognizes and confirms the eternal truth taught by all religions. But the islamic "Shariah" cancels all previous "Shariahs". The original source of the teachings of Islam

is the Quran which was revealed to the Prophet. The traditions of the Prophet himself are regarded by most Muslims as a second authentic source.

The two fundamental religious concepts developed by the Quran are:

(1) The concept of God which is inferred from that of the Universe.
(2) The concept of the relation between man and God which determines the relations of men among themselves and their rights and duties as individuals and members of society.

An "Insight" into the Universe reveals to man order and harmony, purpose and design, pointing to the wisdom and providence of the Creator. The object for which He has created the world is known to Him alone but its design provides for its conservation and shows proportion, beauty and "Justice" leading us to the conception of a Creator (Khaliq) and Preserver (Rab) who is gracious and merciful (Rahman Rahim).

The Universe is subject to the Law of Causality; so is human action. Every action of man has a fixed recompense (Jaza) which he usually gets in this life. When the world comes to an end, there will be a day of Judgement (Yaum-ud-Din) when the whole lives of men will be weighed in the balance and lasting rewards and retributions will be announced.

So we see that the conception of the attributes of God in the Quran is associated with a particular conception of the world (*Weltanschauung*). The Quran visualizes the world as one of Reward and Retribution which is based on Justice tempered with Mercy. But the life of man does not end with this world. There is another world where he will get the final reward or retribution for the sum-total of his action in his life.

Contrary to the attitude taken by many other religions, Islam does not deprecate the value of this world and this

life. As the "field of action" and "the farming-ground for the world to come" the present world is of great importance and value to man. The question what degree of reality the world possesses, from the point of view of Absolute Existence, does not interest the Quran. What it emphasizes is that from the relative point of view of man the world has as much reality as he himself. For all practical purposes both are real. This affirmation of life and of the *physical world is peculiar to Islam.*

As we have seen this conception of the world implies that its creator is the one Supreme Being, the Preserver, the Gracious and Merciful. These are the basic attributes of God from which many others are derived.

The Quran has dealt with the attributes of God definitely and comprehensively but it observes the greatest caution in discussing His Essential Being. The question of the essential nature of God and the world is the most delicate in speculative philosophy. Not only in Theology but also in Metaphysics the conception of essence is generally more negative than positive. The Quran confines itself to emphasizing the Unity of God and His freedom from all conditions. The positive aspect of His nature is not discussed at all.

Very great stress is laid on the Unity of God in the Quran. It is forbidden to speak or think of anybody or anything sharing with God a single attribute, let alone His essential Being. But as far as freedom from conditions is concerned, the Quran follows a middle path. It speaks of God being free from corporality and other conditions to which finite things are subject but does not carry the idea of the Unconditioned to such an extreme as to make it impossible for the limited human intellect to have any idea of God at all. It ascribes to God positive attributes but warns against thinking of these attributes as resembling any human qualities. One is constrained to use the same words for Divine attributes as for human qualities but it should always be borne in mind that the former are essentially different from the latter.

The love of and devotion to the Supreme One is the

first and foremost duty of the believer. To induce the purity of heart and concentration of mind indispensable for true devotion the simple means of prayer, fasting and Haj (Pilgrimage to Mecca) have been prescribed. Real devotion however is not mere ritual but obedience to the will of God, following the Moral Law laid down by Him, identifying oneself with the purpose, which He has assigned to the Universe. This unconditional submission to the will of God is "Islam" in its literal as well as theological sense. This brings the life of man into harmony with the Law of Universe which is the law of man's own nature.

The other implication of the Unity of God which has been specially emphasized is that "devotion" or unconditional submission should be offered to none but God and help should be asked from none but Him because He alone is worthy of devotion and He alone can help in the moment of need. For a man to submit unconditionally to or place unreserved trust in the help of a fellowman or any other finite being is to lose his human dignity which is the worst sin the Islamic "Shariah" knows.

Some other corollaries follow from the Doctrine of Unity which are regarded as basically important in Islam. The Unity of the Creator implies that of creation leading to the idea that human society is like an organism whose members are bound to one another with vital ties. This is the basis of the conception of the universal brotherhood of man. The Quran regards man and woman, master and servant, the rich and the poor as fundamentally equal. No person is superior to another in respect of sex or race or colour or class or vocation. There is only one basis of distinction—Taqwa, i.e. the fear of God, obedience to His Law, service to Him and His creatures. The freedom and value of the individual is an important aspect of equality. The Quran has recognized the independent position and value of the individual. Every person has a direct relation to God. There is no intermediary between them. The Prophet is a leader or teacher, who through his precept and example shows the way to establish and maintain the

proper relation to God. His is the perfectly developed personality which according to the behest of the Quran "model your character on that of God"—has succeeded in embodying in itself the human counter-part of Divine attributes and serves as an ideal to be followed by every person. But the individuality which the Quran wants everybody to develop has to be harmonized with collective life. The moral development and the spiritual perfection of the individual is possible only *in society*. The ascetic life of the recluse which keeps him away from his fellow-beings, is completely rejected by the Quran. It attaches so much importance to the development of social spirit that it makes fundamental religious functions like prayers and Haj pilgrimage congregational and gives priority to the duties which a man owes to his fellow men over those he owes to God.

The conception of the Islamic state in the Quran is that sovereignty really vests in God. He delegates it to the Prophet and from the Prophet it passes on to the Khalifa or Imam. About the manner in which sovereignty is delegated to the Khalifa, there is a difference of opinion among interpreters of the Quran. One sect believes that the Khalifa like the Prophet is appointed by God but the majority of the Muslims think that anybody who is accepted by the general will of the Muslim citizens of the state through oath of allegiance, becomes a rightful Khalifa.

As far as legislation is concerned the fundamental principles of the Law (Shariah) which should govern the Islamic state have been laid down by the Quran. The Prophet by applying them to the Arab society of his time formulated the first Positive Law of Islam. For the future the interpretion of Islamic Law according to changing conditions was left to Mujtahids or competent scholars who are well-versed in the Quran and the Hadis (the sources of the Islamic Shariah) as well as in the general learning of their age.

Under this theocratic state the Quran wants to build up a society based on equality and fraternity, free from bonds of race or country or class, which affords to each of its members, within the limits ofthe Shariah and of collective welfare,

full freedom for realizing the greatest possible measure of material and spiritual values.

Collective welfare is the key to the attitude taken by the Quran towards political, social as well as other aspects of cultural life. In the economic field private property is recognized but special care is taken to prevent the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few persons. Khums and Zakat which it is incumbent on every Muslim to pay (and which it should be noted are forms of capital levy) and the law of inheritance have been designed with this end in view. Private ownership of land (which was in those days the only source of production of wealth) was made subject to so many limitations that it was no more than a nominal ownership. Of the three forms of exploitation, in the bad sense of the word, which existed at the time, slavery, usury and cornering, the last two were practically abolished. Slavery was modified to a system of attaching prisoners of war to families as covenanted servants, with rights as well as duties, till they earned their freedom (though in the latter period of general degeneration the system relapsed into naked slavery). Usury and cornering were strictly prohibited. In short, Islam tried to stop exploitation not through mere exhortation but by law, thus setting an example of state control of economic life. Art and Literature is also made subject to the larger interests of collective life; unbridled, aimless phantasy of poets is condemned by the Quran but creative, stimulating and exalting poetry is encouraged. The Prophet and his successors deprecated those verses of pre-Islamic Arab poets which were obscene and full of barbarous revengeful sentiments, but expressed their appreciation of healthy romantic and heroic pre-Islamic poems which were among the finest examples of simple and effective verse. In Music, stirring and inspiring tunes were preferred to depressing and doleful ones. In Painting and Sculpture images of living beings were forbidden on account of their past association with idolatory and the danger that images of revered leaders (for example those of the Prophet) may come to be worshipped like idols.

The Islamic State and the Muslim States

The Muslim culture developed for a long time under a central theocratic state or Khilafat which passed the following three phases :

(*a*) The rule of the Prophet and his four Righteous Khalifas.
(*b*) The Khilafat of Banu Omayyah.
(*c*) The Khilafat of Banu Abbas.

The first was, according to Muslim historians, that of the complete realization of the Islamic conception of society—a society harmonizing religious and secular life, reconciling the interest of the individuals with those of the community and the interests of the rulers with those of the ruled, a society free from all distinctions of race, colour, class and country. In the second phase the Islamic society maintained a superficial unity but forces of disintegration began to work under the surface. Banu Omayyah set up a dynastic monarchy thus creating a gulf between the rulers and the ruled, the state and its citizens and—what proved to be more disastrous—between the Arabs and the non-Arabs. The luxurious life of the court and the increase in wealth began to have an adverse effect on the general life of Muslim Arabs, but on the whole they retained their hardiness and enterprise and continued to serve their state as brave soldiers and their religion as zealous missionaries. The third phase opened with an aggravation of the disintegrating factors because the Abbasi Khilafat gave up all pretence of ruling in the spirit of democracy. The pomp and grandeur and the personal authority of the Khalifa increased to such an extent that the only difference between him and an absolute monarch in the secular state was, that he had to follow to certain extent the Islamic law in the administration of justice. The first few Abbasi Khalifas managed to retain some measure of popularity owing to their personal qualities but their incapable and weak successors lost once for all

the support of their Muslim subjects. Now the separation between society and state, between the Khalifa and the community was complete. He ruled with the help of his army, not with the goodwill of the people.

The suppression of the democratic principle of liberty and equality on which the Khilafat had been founded by the Prophet and his immediate successors, inevitably resulted in the break-up of this great structure. Spain was the first to become independent; others followed. The separatist tendency in the political field was reflected in cultural life. From the middle of the thirteenth century the common or international element in the cultural life of the Muslim countries became gradually weaker and the national or local element grew stronger. So the Islamic State and the Islamic Culture in the strict sense lasted only for about half a century under the Prophet and the four "righteous" Khalifas. The Khilafat under Banu Omayyah and more definitely under Banu Abbas was only partly Islamic in its political and cultural pattern. The so-called Muslim states which appeared after the dissolution of the Abbasi Khilafat in the middle of the thirteenth century, were either dynastic states of Muslim rulers or national states of Muslim peoples and had very little in them of the political or cultural spirit of Islam.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONTACT BETWEEN HINDU CULTURE AND MUSLIM CULTURE IN INDIA

As we have said before, Muslims came to India as invaders for the first time in AD 712 and established their rule over Sindh and Multan. As traders they had probably started coming to South India much earlier. In the eighth century and thereafter they continued to settle down along the sea-coast from Sindh to Kathiawar and Gujerat. So in a way, the contact between Islamic culture and Hindu culture had already begun in the eighth century. Reference has been made to the books of Hindu scholars on Medicine, Mathematics and Astronomy, which went from Sindh to Arabia and helped in the intellectual development of the Muslims. The impulse which the Bhakti movement among the Hindus received from Muslim ideas has also been mentioned. There are some indications of the influence of the dress, customs and manners of Arab Muslims on people in South India but as scientific investigation of the problem has not yet been made we cannot venture any positive assertion on this point.

But by the end of the tenth century the Muslims had only touched the periphery of Hindu culture; they were yet far from its centre. The real contact between Hindu culture and Muslim culture began, not even with the occupation of the Punjab and Multan by the Ghaznavides in the eleventh century, but with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The invasions of North India by Muslims began from Ghazni, the capital of a state corresponding to the bulk of what is now called Afghanistan—together with a part of Iran. This was one of the large states set up by adventurous Turkish Chiefs after the power of the Abbasi Khilafat began to decline. The first invasion of the Punjab was made by Subuktagin in 986-987. His son, Mahmud, carried on wars of pillage and conquest throughout his reign

and succeeded in establishing the Ghaznavi rule over Peshawar and a large part of western Punjab which lasted for about 150 years. In 1170 Muhammad Ghori who had wrested the "Empire of Ghazni" from the Ghaznavi dynasty opened a new campaign in a bid to extend his territory in India. After suffering one crushing defeat he and his general Qutubuddin Aibak succeeded by exploiting the dissensions among the Rajput princes, in conquering a considerable part of Northern India. When Muhammad Ghori died, Qutubuddin Aibak became the independent ruler of the conquered territory in India which came to be known as the Sultanate of Delhi. This was in AD 1206.

The Delhi Sultanate was ruled by several Muslim dynasties one after another for about three hundred years though its extent varied from almost the whole of India under Ala-uddin Khilji to a very small area surrounding the city of Delhi under the Syeds.

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate was an epoch-making event in the history of India. For the first time in five hundred years after the death of Harsha, India had now a certain degree of political unity. Though the new rulers were foreigners they made India their home. Had they been cut off for a long time from the land of their origin and its culture like the Greeks who came from Bactria in the second century BC or had their culture been as primitive as that of the Scythians and Huns, they would have been absorbed in Hindu society. But as they were representatives of an advanced international culture and maintained perpetual contact with the seats of that culture outside India including Baghdad—the political centre, now only symbolically of the Islamic world, it took them very long to be completely Indianized.

As a matter of fact they wanted to establish the same type of Islamic state in India as existed in other Muslim countries, i.e. a dynastic monarchy limited by the Shariah giving its non-Muslim subjects religious and cultural freedom but slightly less political rights. However, as we shall see, the attempt to make the Delhi Sultanate an Islamic state

even in this limited sense did not succeed. It only had the unfortunate result of preventing the political unity of India from taking the shape of a new national unity.

But the very fact of Hindus and Muslims living together had begun the process of cultural understanding which bore fruit after three centuries. The Delhi Sultanate, far from turning this spontaneous process of unification to some purpose could not even understand it. It was the Moghul Emperor Akbar who made a conscious effort, for the first time in the thousand years which had passed since the death of Harsha, to revive the national unity of India. In this he was greatly helped by having before him three hundred years' history of the Delhi Sultanate, its failures as well as its successes.

I

We have now to review this period from the point of the cultural ideal which the Delhi Sultanate tried to realize and its implications for the national unity of India.

The first half of the thirteenth century, when the Delhi Sultanate was taking shape, was on the whole one of distress and disintegration for the Eastern Islamic world. The decline of the Abbasi Khilafat, the disruptive activities of the Batini sects, the pressure of the European crusaders from the West and that of the Moghuls from the East, had weakened all Muslim states and no rallying point was left for the cultural forces of Islam.

The rise of the Delhi Sultanate in India provided such a rallying point. Scholars, saints, poets, generals, statesmen were attracted to Delhi as iron filings by a magnet. So the founders of the Sultanate had no time to think what form they should give to the new state. After the reign of Qutubuddin Aibak which was merely a period of military occupation, during the twenty-five years of the rules of Iltumish the Delhi Sultanate was almost automatically cast into the mould of the Eastern Muslim states of that period, i.e. it became, under the nominal sovereignty of the

Khalifa of Baghdad an independent monarchy professing to be limited by Shariah (Divine Law). The nominal allegiance to the Khilafat of Baghdad was transferred after its destruction by the Moghuls, to the Fatimi Khalifas of Egypt and under the Syeds to Timur. The Lodi and Suri dynasties called themselves, as their coins show, simply the representatives of the "Khalifa" without naming any particular person.

Not only in relation to the Khilafat but in other respects also the Islamic character of the Delhi Sultanate was no more than a fiction. The Persian absolutist conception of monarchy which had crept into the Islamic state after the four Righteous Khalifas, had become more defined in the states ruled by Persian and Turkish kings. But in the Delhi State this un-Islamic absolutism became still more pronounced. In the Persian and Turkish states the kings had deviated from the Islamic way only in the field of Constitutional Law and to some extent in the system of land revenue. In most of the other matters they had to follow the Shariah as interpreted by Fuqaha (the Doctors of Islamic Law). But in the Delhi State it depended on the sweet will of the Sultan to follow or not to follow the Shariah in his private life as well as in the administration of the state. Specially in the field of Common Law his right to legislate according to his own will was acknowledged by all.

In economic matters also the Delhi State deviated more than other Islamic states from the line laid down by Islam. For example, the rent of agricultural land which had been one-fifth of the produce (and less for inferior land) since the beginning of Islam was raised considerably by the Lodis and Suris and once under Alauddin Khilji soared up to one half. The concession of fifty per cent granted by Islam to Muslim cultivators does not seem ever to have been given by Delhi Sultans. The Islamic Law of Inheritance was not strictly enforced. Converts to Islam were allowed to follow the local customs which in many cases meant disinheriting daughters in violation of one of the fundamental principles

of the Shariah. Lending and borrowing of money on interest, strictly forbidden by Islam, was common, at least among the Hindus.

In the field of morality the personal life of the King had been in practice above all checks since the end of the Righteous Khilafat, but the Ihtisab (moral censorship) in public life, which had been more or less strictly in force in some Muslim states was so lax under most of the Delhi Sultans as to be practically non-existent. The aristocratic class was on the whole, subject to moral restraint but it was exercised not by the state but by public opinion inspired by the religious spirit of the common people.

In short, the Delhi Sultanate was not an "Islamic" state even in the limited sense in which this word is used for other mediaeval Muslim states. Nor was it a national state of the Muslims. No doubt the Muslims, as co-religionists of the Sultan and forming the bulk of the army on which he depended for maintaining his rule, were on the whole treated better than non-Muslims. But even the Muslims were subject to discrimination, the nobles being regarded as superior to commoners and those of foreign origin to local Muslims. In relation to the King, however, all classes of Muslims as well as Hindus were mere subjects and had no voice in shaping the policy of the state. So we cannot call the Delhi Sultanate anything except an absolute monarchy under various Muslim dynasties.

But the important question in which we are interested is the relation of the Delhi Sultanate to the Hindus who formed the majority of the population and its implications for Indian nationhood. We have seen that from the beginning of the ninth century to the end of the tenth century the whole of India except the South, was under the rule of Rajput princes and under the influence of the romantic age of chivalry. From the point of view of national unity it was a period of utter disintegration. The division of Hindu society into castes and sub-castes had passed all reasonable limits. Even the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas had been split up into innumerable sub-castes like the Sudras. The

leading classes, that is the Rajputs and the Brahmins, had also been divided into castes and *gotras*. Among the Rajputs the tribal spirit was so strong as to lead to unending feuds. Obviously nobody could dream of the unity of India in such an atmosphere.

It was this disintegration which gave the Muslim invaders the opportunity of conquering India. No united front was ever presented to Mahmud Ghaznavi. Against Muhammad Ghori a last minute rally of Rajput rulers was attempted but it was not complete. The powerful Raja of Kanauj did not join it and no more than one-tenth of India's power of resistance was used.

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate produced the same feeling among the Hindus as the conquests of Gurjars and Huns had done. Physically they yielded to the conquerors but their souls entrenched themselves in racial and religious self-sufficiency and aloofness in such a way that no intercourse between them and the Muslims seemed to be possible. The nick-name of *mlechcha* originally designed for Gurjars and Huns was now used for Muslims.

If the antipathy of the common Hindus to Muslims was mainly sentimental, that of the higher classes to the Muslim state was due to more concrete reasons. The Hindu Rajas and local chiefs were afraid that the Muslim rulers would annex their territories. They could have tolerated a central government, even of foreigners, if it merely levied tribute and for the rest left them to themselves. But a unitary government trying to seize their territories was repugnant to them not only from the point of view of self-interest but also on principle as it was contrary to all Indian traditions.

The Brahmins suffered no less from the change in the political constellation. Though the Delhi Sultanate had given complete religious freedom to the Hindus, recognized their personal law and appointed Brahmins to help the judges in administering it, it could by no means make up for the loss of social and economic advantages which the Brahmins as a class had to bear. Formerly, they were

employed as *purohits* (priests), astrologers and judicial officers, and administered charitable departments in the states (which had now been replaced by Delhi Sultanate) their privileges were recognized by law, their security guaranteed by the state. But now the political upheaval had directly hit their official status and privileges and indirectly undermined their social position and influence. Besides the example of Muslim society, which had no priestly class, may have influenced Hindu society to attach less importance to Brahmins.

As for the generality of the common people their relations with the ruling power became, in course of time, fairly good though not very close. After the initial phase of resentment and mistrust they began to co-operate with the new government because they had no particular reason to be dissatisfied with it. On the whole, the Muslim kings maintained peace and order, ruled justly and gave religious and cultural freedom to their Hindu subjects. No doubt they had changed civil and criminal law and introduced some provisions of the Islamic Law. But in India it was nothing new that rulers should enforce their own law on their subjects professing another religion. Both the Hindu and the Buddhist Rajas had done it. Of course, interference with the Dharmasastra in the field of religious and personal law would have been intolerable to the Hindus. But this the Delhi Sultans scrupulously avoided. On the contrary, they were considerate enough to appoint Pandits in the central as well as provincial courts to help in deciding cases of Hindu personal law as well as those which concerned the religious life of the Hindus.

But though the Delhi Sultanate had given political unity to India the Hindus could not regard it as their own state because the rulers, with the exception of Sikandar Lodi and Sher Shah Suri, made no positive attempt to bridge the gulf between themselves and their Hindu subjects. In fact, they widened it by imposing the poll-tax (Jizya) upon the Hindus with the misguided motive of justifying the name of Islamic state. As we have shown the Delhi Sultanate

was not an Islamic state, and even if it had been one, it had no right to impose the Jizya because it was meant by the rulers of the early Islamic state to be the price of exemption from compulsory military service which did not exist then. Though the Jizya introduced by the Delhi Sultans was only a nominal amount and was not regularly realized yet it hurt the self-respect of Hindus. Moreover, they were in practice, though not in theory, discriminated against in the matter of state service. Mohammad Tughlaq was the first ruler who pursued a conciliatory policy towards the Hindus. By the end of this period specially under Sikandar Lodi and Sher Shah Suri religious discrimination in state service had practically disappeared. Hindus had begun to learn Persian, the court language and to get some of the biggest and responsible posts. The smaller Muslim states, which had made themselves independent of the Sultanate, e.g. Bengal and the Bahamani kingdom of the Deccan, or which had not yet come under the sway of Delhi, e.g. Kashmir (during the reign of Zainul-Abidin) had almost from the very beginning, a much more equitable policy and won the affection and confidence of Hindus.

But long before the Hindus became reconciled to the Muslim rulers their relations with the common Muslims had considerably improved. As soon as they saw that the Muslims had made India their home, that they were practically free from racial prejudice and their religious bigotry and feeling of superiority as conquerors was gradually diminishing, they began to relax their hostile attitude. One of the most powerful factors which contributed to this reconciliation was the historic role of mediators played by Muslim Sufis and Hindu saints of the Bhakti school.

Most of the Muslim Sufis in India conceived of and preached divine unity in terms of idealistic monism. The Hindus who found their ideas very much like those of Vedantic philosophy were naturally attracted by them. But the greatest attraction for the lower castes of Hindus was in the social organization of Islam which was founded on the basis of equality and fraternity, and still retained

something of these qualities. Quite a large number of Hindus embraced Islam and even those who did not, were now better disposed towards the Muslims. The Hindu converts to Islam were at first ostracized by their own people but gradually came to be tolerated and served as a connecting link between their brothers in blood and their their brethren in faith.

Another great force which created a general atmosphere of religious harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims, was the Bhakti movement. Bhakti was popularized in Northern India by Ramananda, the famous saint of the Ramanuja school who probably lived from the end of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century. He made its appeal stronger and wider by substituting Ramachandarji, the *Avatar* (Incarnation) of Vishnu for the god himself as the object of devotion, for Rama's fascinating personality was much nearer to human imagination. Ramananda threw the doors of his circle open to all the four castes—men and women—and even to Muslims. His gifted disciple Tulsidas used the magic of his poetry for winning the hearts of millions of people for Ram Bhakti. Another great disciple of Ramananda, Kabir (who lived from some date in the first half of the fifteenth century to the end of that or beginning of the next century) started a movement of his own attracting not only Hindus but many Muslims as disciples.

The song of love and devotion sung by Kabir is a symphony of the deepest notes of religious feeling of the common people of India—Hindus, Muslims and others. Kabir's conception of God is a purely mystical one. In fact God is to him not a conception but an experience beyond the grasp of intellect. When attempts are made to interpret this experience in intellectual terms the results are conflicting, even contradictory. According to Kabir each of the contradictory conceptions is true in its own way but each is incomplete—expressing only one aspect of the truth. So, he regards the spiritual foundations of Hinduism and Islam as one and finds equal inspiration in both, but is equally

revolted by the whole superstructures of dogma and ritual which both have built on this foundation. He strongly condemns the distinction of caste, colour and country. Like other exponents of Bhakti he was averse to systematizing or writing down his ideas but expressed them in songs which were orally sung in his life-time but later on compiled in several books.

More or less contemporary with Kabir was the renowned saint Guru Nanak (born AD 1469) who founded a new religious movement by blending the conception of the Unity of God closely allied to the Islamic conception with the Hindu doctrine of Re-birth. Along with the mystical experience as the basis of religion he greatly emphasized moral action. His movement of spiritual purification and moral reform of both Hindus and Muslims later developed into a separate religious sect.

In Bengal there were several Bhakti movements counting both Hindus and Muslims among their followers but the most popular of them was the Krishna Bhakti of the great saint Chaitanya (1485—1533). In Maharashtra Namdeo (born in early fourteenth century) and Tukaram (seventeenth century) raised Bhakti above the level of a mere popular movement and exercised a deep influence on the intellectual circles as well as on the common people.

These great and pure souls, some of whom we have named above, tried to divest religion of its outer trappings, taking the pure spirit of Hindu mysticism as well as that of Islamic Tasavwuf and blending them into a religious movement which should unite the whole of India in love and devotion to one God. But unfortunately pure mystical experience is not enough to constitute a religion. So the religious movements started by them soon crystallized into separate sects with all the adjuncts of positive religions. Still, this does not mean that their efforts were wholly wasted. They could not free religion from the bonds of ceremony and ritual but they broke down the stagnation of religious consciousness giving it movement, flow, freshness and life. They could not mingle the currents of Hinduism

and Islam on the surface but they showed that the springs which feed them do meet somewhere under the surface. They created in India an atmosphere of religious harmony which was not to be seen anywhere else in the Middle Ages.

In aesthetic consciousness, which is more deeply influenced by physical environment, Hindus and Muslims came still nearer to each other. Two of the fine arts, painting and music had been subjected to severe limitation by Islam and generally did not prosper in Muslim countries. In India painting seems to have been avoided by Muslims during this period but Indian music captured their hearts. Apart from the common people who were generally converts from Hinduism, many Muslim nobles and kings specially those of Bijapur and Jaunpur, were very fond of music. Sultan Hussain Sharqui of Jaunpur is said to have invented a new musical air called "Khayal" which became equally popular among Muslims and Hindus. "Dhurpad" the classical Hindu air was very much liked by Muslims of refined taste. Ibrahim Adil Shah, the king of Bijapur was a great connoisseur of music and wrote a book on the subject under the title of "Nauras". The Muslim Sufis simply adored music. In short, music was one of the forces which caused the hearts of Hindus and Muslims to beat in unison.

Architecture was the main field in which the Muslims gave expression to their love of beauty and which afforded the greatest opportunity for the Muslim mind and the Hindu mind to influence each other. Among the rulers of India during that period Muslim Kings had the best resources and could indulge in their desire for fine buildings, but they had generally to employ Hindu architects and artisans. The conception of a building which was born in the mind of a Muslim king could not in itself be unaffected by his Indian environment. Further when it was designed and executed by the Hindu architect it was recast in the mould of the Hindu mind. So the process of blending which in spite of the conscious efforts of some great souls could not be carried out in the field of religion was effected almost unconsciously in architecture. In the very first century of

the Delhi Sultanate a Hindu-Muslim style of architecture had come into being which was adopted in the fourteenth century with various degrees of modification by the independent Muslim kings of Bengal, Gujerat and the Deccan and also by the Hindu Rajas of Bundelkhand and Rajputana.

What now remains of the first great buildings built by the Delhi Sultans, the Jama Masjid of Ajmer and the Quwatul-Islam mosque near Delhi proves that from the very beginning the Islamic conceptions of architecture had to be adapted to the available resources. Fergusson has pointed out that the design of the Jama Masjid in Ajmer has been taken from the Jain temple on Mount Abu. As for the Quwatul-Islam mosque, it was actually built on the site of a Jain temple out of its debris. The mangnificent Qutab Minar which was a part of this mosque is Islamic in its general conception but in its execution one can clearly see the resemblance to the pillars of the Gupta era and the Shikhars of the Medieval period. Moreover, the decorative work shows direct influence of the North Indian Hindu and Jain styles. The images of human beings and animals have been avoided but scattered flower wreaths and baskets are eloquent of the source from which they have come, and the way they have been blended harmoniously with Arabic text in the Kufic style of calligraphy has produced a beautiful effect.

The Muslim states which had seceded from Delhi adopted this style with local modifications more in keeping with Hindu styles. Specially in buildings of Gujerat all the elements except the dome and the pointed arch are Hindu. The mosque of Muhafiz Khan built in the fifteenth and the mausoleum of Abu Turab built in the sixteenth century are fine examples of this style.

Much more than in the Delhi Sultanate was the intimate intercourse and the harmony of feelings and ideas between Hindus and Muslims to be seen in the smaller Muslim states which made themselves independent towards the end of this period. These states specially those of Bengal and the Deccan lay far from the centre of Muslim power in a

purely Hindu environment and had to assert their independence against Delhi; so they had to depend on the goodwill and support of their Hindu subjects. Their rulers were, in their smaller spheres, nearer to the people and understood and respected their feelings and desires. They generally abstained from displacing local chiefs but simply levied a tribute on them and associated Hindus with the administration of the state freely giving them small as well as big posts. So they were more successful in establishing contact with their Hindu subjects and winning their affection.

Among the kings in Bengal, Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1518) and his son Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah (1518-33) won great popularity among other things, by patronizing the local Bengali language and enriching it with translations from Sanskrit. At the instance of Husain Shah, Maladhar Vasu translated Bhagwad Gita into Bengali. Mahabharata was translated under the patronage of Nusrat Shah. Another Muslim king caused the Ramayana to be translated by Krittvi Das.

In the Deccan states the relations between the Muslim rulers and their Hindu subjects were even more intimate and cordial. The founder of the Bahmani kingdom had got his throne through the efforts of his Brahmin friend Gangu. Out of gratitude and love for him the king not only made him his Vizier but adopted his name Gangu as the nick-name of the royal dynasty. During the Bahmani period generally Brahmins and other Hindus had a great share in the administration of the state. The five Muslim kingdoms which were built on the ruins of the Bahmani Sultanate continued this liberal policy. They were patrons of the local languages and some of them were good Marathi and Urdu poets. Urdu was a dialect of western Hindi which came to the Deccan as the *lingua franca* in which the Muslim rulers and their Hindu and Muslim companions from the North conversed with one another. It was in the Deccan that it grew to be a literary language serving as an intellectual bridge between the local people and the immigrants (Hindu as well as Muslim) from the North.

But the greatest success achieved in the effort to create harmony between Hindus and Muslims was attained during this period by Sultan Zainul-Abdin, the king of Kashmir. His name lives in honour and love not only in history but in legends known to every child in Kashmir. He was in all respects a great king but his greatest title to fame is that he was completely free from religious prejudice and did not make the slightest discrimination between Hindus and Muslims. When he ascended the throne in 1427 he called back the large number of Hindus, specially Brahmins, who had left Kashmir on account of the bad treatment meted out to them by his predecessor Sikandar and won their hearts through sincere regard and affection. State service was open to Hindus in Kashmir even before his time, but he put an end to all distinction of race and faith. He got many Sanskrit books translated into Persian so that Muslims could study the Hindu religion and the ancient Indian culture. He was a great patron of arts and crafts, specially of music and great musicians from distant lands were attracted to his court. When more is known about the history of Kashmir during this period it will probably be found that the great task of creating a nation peformed by Akbar had its prototype in the work done on a smaller scale by Zainul-Abdin in Kashmir about a hundred years before him.

CHAPTER TEN

THE THIRD CONFLUENCE THE HINDUSTANI CULTURE—I

During the Rising Phase of the Moghul Empire

IN 1494 the ruler of Farghana, a small state in Turkestan, died and his son Babur succeeded him at the age of twelve. Babur was the descendant of two great conquerors. On the paternal side he descended from Timur and on the maternal side from Chengis Khan. Inspired by their example he set out on an adventurous career from the very beginning of his rule. After many ups and downs he conquered Kabul in 1504, made it his capital and began to dream of conquering India.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Delhi Sultanate had become a tribal state of the Afghans and their mutual feuds had sapped its strength. Ibrahim Lodi, the nominal Emperor was hated by his nobles and by his kinsmen. There could be no better opportunity for a foreign invader. So Babur opened his campaign of conquest against India and in the fifth invasion in 1526 defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi and occupied Delhi. Thus was founded the Moghul Empire which under Babur's grandson Akbar developed into the national state of India serving as the background of a new national culture, known as the Hindustani Culture.

Before we begin to trace the growth of the Hindustani culture we have to point out that the Moghuls who invaded India in the first half of the sixteenth century were quite different from the Turkish invaders who had come more than three hundred years ago. The Turks who conquered India under Qutubuddin Aibak were mere fighters who had no experience of government, and no cultural background. Their simple natures had absorbed variegated elements of the Turanion, Persian and Islamic political and cultural

systems and something of the local Indian colour, but they were not competent to blend all these different hues into one harmonious design. On the other hand, the Chagtai dynasty to which Babur belonged, had long traditions of rulership and what was more, had by grafting upon the sturdiness and hardiness of the Moghuls and Turks the refinement and grace of the Persians and the spiritual depth and moral discipline of Islam, succeeded in developing a healthy and predominantly harmonious secular culture. When it came to India it brought with it this Moghul-Islamic culture and what was still more valuable, the experience of blending cultural elements of different origins into one harmonious whole. Both Babur and his son Humayun had the breadth of mind and the imagination to set about the great task of creating political and cultural unity in India but they had very brief reigns. It was given to Akbar who succeeded his father Humayun at the age of fourteen and ruled for fifty years to build up a new National State and National Culture in India.

We have said that the rulers of the independent Muslim states in Bengal, the Deccan and Kashmir had brought Hindus and Muslims politically and culturally nearer to each other and even the later Sultans of Delhi like Sikandar Lodi and Sher Shah Suri had adopted a more liberal attitude towards the Hindus. But this was an almost unconscious and therefore very slow process of adaptation to the needs of the day. No Muslim ruler had during the three hundred and odd years which had elapsed since the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, the insight to look under the superficial currents of history at the inner current striving to come to the surface, to see behind the outward diversity of Indian life the soul of unity struggling to realize itself. It required an Akbar in whom the adventure and enterprise of a Chagtai, the large-hearted toleration of a Sufi and the liberal rationalism of a philosopher had combined to produce the courage and the strength to free himself from the shackles of the past and to strike the path of a new life.

The most important characteristic of the new Indian

nation which Akbar brought into being, was that it was based not on the community of religion but on the citizenship of the same state. The early emergence of this modern idea in India where the modern age began as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, is not as surprising as it appears at the first glance. The need for making state instead of religion, the binding force in social life, which arose in Europe after the Reformation had put an end to uniformity of religious belief, had risen in India much earlier when the Muslims came with quite a different religion and the population of India was divided into two opposite, and at first hostile camps. Normally state should have taken the place of religion as the basis of collective life soon after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. But the might of tradition was so great that this necessary change could not be brought about till the unorthodox Moghul dynasty which had broken away with the tradition of acknowledging the sovereignty of an Arab Khalifa long before moving to India, came into power here and produced a ruler with an original mind, like Akbar.

It may be objected that Akbar who had formally declared himself to be the religious head of Muslims of India should rather be called the founder of a religious state of the Muslims, than that of a secular national state. But every student of Indian history knows that Akbar's claim to religious leadership was a mere political stratagem to break the power of the Ulema and to make his own doubly strong.

That the conception of a secular and non-communal state was quite clear in Akbar's mind is reflected in the following extract from his letter to Shah Abbas Safavi of Persia:

> The various religious communities are Divine treasures entrusted to us by God. We must love them as such. It should be our firm faith that every religion is blessed by Him, and our earnest endeavour to enjoy the bliss of the ever-green garden of universal toleration. The

> Eternal King showers his favours on all men without distinction. Kings who are shadows of God should never give up this principle.

Abul-Fazl who was Akbar's "friend, philosopher and guide" writes in his Ain-i-Akbari :

> The king should be above all religious differences and should see, that religious considerations do not come in the way of the duty which he owes to every class and every community. Under his all-embracing care everyone should find peace and happiness so that the benefits confined by the shadow of God are universal.

Akbar acted sincerely and consistently on this principle. As soon as he had the reins of Government firmly in his hands, he abolished the pilgrim tax and the Jizya (poll-tax) in 1563 thus putting an end to the invidious distinction between his Hindu and Muslim subjects. But even more significant was the edict issued in 1564 that *no resident of India whatever his caste or creed, could be made a slave.* Seen against the background of Medieval Asia this was a solemn declaration of the fundamental policy that the state recognized the sanctity of individual liberty and the equality before law of all its citizens without any distinction of class or creed. Further, he threw all state services, civil as well as military, open to the Hindus and appointed many of them to the highest posts in his realm. Matrimonial alliance between the Imperial family and some of the Rajput princes was a very effective symbolical expression of the new spirit of brotherhood which Akbar wanted to create between Hindus and Muslims.

But we should be quite clear about the limitations of the Nationhood and National State which Akbar's policy brought into being. In the introduction to this book the minimum condition for nationhood was said to be the acceptance by all sections of people living in a country of a common constitution. In Akbar's time the sense of

Nationhood was still more limited. The binding or cementing force in a political community or nation was in those days, in the absence of a written or unwritten constitution or common ideal of government, was the attachment of the people to the *person* of the king or his *dynasty*. Obviously the universal allegiance of all his subjects was enjoyed by that king alone who was on the whole good and just to all without distinction and was shown to his successors only as long as they followed this general policy. The feeling of a common nationhood at that time was not as deep and as lasting as in these days of more or less permanent constitution expressing the general will of the people themselves.

It seems that Akbar was quite conscious that the solidarity of the state founded by him depended on the degree of the attachment of the people to the person of the king. That was why he laid much more emphasis on direct contact with the people than any Muslim king had ever thought of doing. His practice of giving *darshan* (public audience) to the masses of people by sitting in the balcony of his palace revived the memory of old Indian Rajas and won the hearts of his subjects.

Other important traditions of the old Indian state were revived by the Moghul state under Akbar. Public charity and moral reform which the Delhi Sultanate had handled only perfunctorily in the limited field of Muslim society, were now carried on systematically and their scope extended to cover all citizens without any distinction. Hindu Pandits and Sadhus were supported by the state more or less like Muslim Ulema and Fuqara (learned men and ascetics) and *mandirs* were in many cases given grants like *masjids* by Moghul Emperors including Aurangzeb. Akbar imposed restrictions on drinking, gambling and prostitution applying equally to all sections of the people. He even put down at the risk of being accused of interference with religion some specifically Hindu customs like the *Sati* (burning alive of widows).

Akbar's great-grandson Aurangzeb made the unsuccessful attempt to turn this secular Moghul state into a Muslim

religious state with the result that it was shaken to its very foundations and after his death reduced to a shadow of the great empire that it had been for a hundred years.

The task of building up a national culture round the Moghul State which was in a limited sense, a national state, was also begun by Akbar and continued after an interruption during the reign of Aurangzeb, to the end of this period. As we have seen in the preceding chapter the wide gulf that yawned between Hindus and Muslims in the early period of the Delhi Sultanate, had been gradually bridged by many forces including the spirit of love and harmony fostered by Hindu Bhakts and Muslim Sufis, and the two communities had begun to influence the cultural life of each other specially in the aesthetic field. The process of the blending of the Persian Islamic culture with the Hindu culture which had been automatically going on, was quickened by the conscious and to some extent planned efforts of Akbar, which resulted in the creation of a common culture centred in the court but spreading far and wide throughout the Moghul dominions. The root of a common culture is always a common language. The mixture of Persian with a dialect of Western Hindi in the thirteenth century spoken in and around Delhi had produced a *lingua franca* known as Hindavi, Hindi or Hindustani which later on came to be called Urdu. This was now the general medium of intercourse between Hindus and Muslims but it had not yet acquired the status of a literary language except in the Deccan. In Northern India Persian had been the court language as well as the language of literary expression and conversation among the Muslims. Hindus in government service had started learning Persian during the reign of Sikandar Lodi (beginning of sixteenth century) but as state accounts were still kept in Hindi, it was not compulsory for Hindu employees of the state to learn Persian. Now Todar Mal, who was Akbar's Finance Minister ordered all accounts throughout the Empire to be kept in Persian and all correspondence to be carried on in the same language, with the result that all Hindus in the service of

the state, whose number was now very large, learnt Persian. Moreover, Hindu noblemen and Rajput Chiefs who had now daily contact with the Emperor in open court as well as in private audiences and accompanied him in hunting parties and military expeditions, found an adequate knowledge of Persian indispensable. So with the increasing contact between the Emperor and his Hindu subjects the Persian language became more popular among the Hindus. But the direct and most effective cause of Persian becoming the common language of Hindus and Muslims was that Akbar, perhaps for the first time in the history of India, opened a large number of Government schools in which Hindu and Muslim children were taught together through the medium of Persian.

This system of common education for all citizens of the state helped not only in creating the community of language but also that of ideas. Apart from religious schools which were denominational, all secular schools had the same syllabus of teaching for all people without distinction of caste or creed comprising, according to Abul Fazl, Persian literature, composition and calligraphy as general subjects and ethics, arithmetic book-keeping and office work, agriculture, mensuration, geometry, astrology, domestic economy, political science, medicine, logic, physics, mathematics and history divided into grades and comparments. The policy of having common schools with a purely secular syllabus was specially designed to create a favourable intellectual atmosphere for national unity.

This educational policy promoted cultural understanding on a higher level. Hindu and Muslim scholars were encouraged to translate standard works from Sanskrit into Persian and to write books on past and contemporary History.

To take translations first. Atharva Veda and Ramayana were rendered into Persian by Mulla Abdul Quadir Badaoni in co-operation with a Hindu Pandit. Later several translations of the Ramayana were made into Persian prose and poetry by Hindus. Mahabharata was translated by a

board of Hindu and Muslim scholars of which Mulla Abdul Quadir was also a member. The great poet Faizi rendered Lilavati, the classical work on Mathematics into Persian. Other Sanskrit books on Mathematics and Natural Sciences were done by Hindu translators. During the reign of Shahjehan, Prince Dara Shikoh who was passionately in love with Hindu philosophy and mysticism, made the invaluable treasures of Hindu thought, the Upanishads, the Bhagwad Gita and Yoga Vashishta available to Muslim readers in Persian, and himself wrote a book *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (The Meeting Place of Two Oceans) which is a comparative study of Hindu and Muslim mystic philosophy.

In history, the works of Hindu writers Bandraban Das, Sujan Rai Chandra Bhan Brahman, Bhim Sen and Ishar Das are no less important than those of Abul Fazl, Abdul Quadir Badaoni, Khafi Khan and other well-known Muslim historians of the period. The study of these books shows that apart form personal idiosyncrasies there is a remarkable similarity in the point of view and the way of presentation of Hindu and Muslim historians. They have a common attachment to the Moghul State, not wholly based on personal interest, and made a sincere effort to present a true and fairly objective picture of the period they were writing about concentrating on the king as the central figure but with occasional revealing touches about social conditions and cultural life.

Persian poetry was also cultivated by Hindus along with Muslims. Mirza Manohar Tausani, Chandra Bhan Brahman, Banwari Lal Wali, though not to be classed with the great masters Faizi, Urfi, Naziri, Kalim and Qudsi, were better poets than many Muslim contemporaries who could claim Persian as their mother tongue. Specially Chandra Bhan Brahman's best verses are an example of how a Hindu could, in a short time, not only make the Persian language but the spirit of Persian poetry his own to an astonishing degree. It was for Persian poetry in India, a period of transition. The graceful classical simplicity of Khusru was gradually giving place to a romantic intensity of emotion

and uncurbed flight of imagination reflected in Urfi's works. The verse of Hindu poets are also marked by this dawning romanticism.

As for letter-writing as a literary art it had become the preserve of Hindu writers. With the exception of Abul Fazl and Alamgir (Aurangzeb) who are regarded as masters of Persian prose, no Muslim *writer* could be compared in this particular branch of literature to Munshi Harkaran, Chandra Bhan Brahman, Munshi Madho Ram, Munshi Nihal Chand and Munshi Avadhe Raj. Two styles of literary letter-writing were current during the period—the simple direct and forceful style of Alamgir, reminiscent of the early heroic life of the Moghuls and the heavy academic, magniloquent style of Abul Fazl reflecting the complexity and grandeur of the Imperial Court. Among Hindu writers Chandra Bhan was an exponent of the first and Madho Ram that of the second style. As long as letter-writing in Persian was in fashion in India, the published collections of the letters of Chandra Bhan and Madho Ram served as models for all Hindu and Muslim writers. Though practical considerations had led Akbar to make Persian the court language as well as the common literary language of the state, yet he did not neglect the promotion of the indigenous tongues Braj Bhasha, Avadhi, etc. known under the generic name of Hindi. These like other local languages had begun to develop before Akbar. Avadhi had produced a great poet, Malik Mohammad Jayasi, the author of Padmavat during the reign of Sher Shah. Under Akbar the *élan* generated by national consciousness favoured the growth of Hindi which made great progress through the joint effort of Hindus and Muslims. Surdas, the famous bard of Krishna Bhakti was a Hindi poet of a high order. The collection of his songs inspired by love and devotion to Sri Krishna is known as *Sur Sagar*. Abdur Rahim Khan Khana, a pillar of Akbar's court was himself a good Hindi poet and a great patron of Hindi poetry. Other Hindi poets of Akbar's court were Ganga, Narhari and the favourite friend of the Emperor, Birbal. Akbar himself is

said to have composed verses in Hindi. Later, Keshav'Das, Bihari, Dev and Ras Khan (a Muslim) carried Hindi poetry to great heights. Bhushan wrote epics to immortalize the glory of Shivaji and Chatarsal. The most advanced among the branches of Hindi, later known as Urdu, was during this period current in Northern India only as a language of intercourse, its literary form being confined to the Deccan and Gujerat.

In architecture, the process of the blending of Hindu and Muslim elements had already begun in the earlier period of the Delhi Sultanate but its consummation in a perfectly harmonious style required the originality of mind and the breadth of vision of the Moghul Emperors. Babur and Humayun had brought with them a purely Persian taste in architecture as well as Persian architects. The few of their buildings which are extant, e.g. the mosques at Panipat and Sambhal built by Babur and that at Fatahabad, Hissar built by Humayun are in the style of the medieval buildings of Isfahan in Persia. So is the best architectural achievement of Akbar's early reign, Humayun's tomb in Delhi, designed by the Persian architect Mirza Inayatullah. But later on, Akbar attempted in this field as in the political and intellectual, a synthesis of the Turco-Persian Muslim conceptions with the Hindu-Indian and thus created the graceful Moghul style pleasing to the eye and restful to the mind. The general design of the Jama Masjid in Fatehpur Sikri is taken from that in Isfahan ; its imposing lofty gate is a picture of the classical simplicity of medieval Persia. But its domes reveal the influence of the Jain style and so do the domes of the mosques on Mount Abu. In Jehangir's time the Hindu influence seems to have increased. The tomb of Akbar at Sikandra shows, in spite of its Muslim arches and domes, the general pattern of Buddhistic Viharas or of the chariots of Mahabalipuram.

During the reign of Shahjehan, which carried Moghul architecture to the height of perfection, new architects were brought from Persia and other countries and a fresh wave of foreign influences tended to weaken that of the indigen-

ous Hindu style, but it had, by that time so completely fused itself into what was called the Moghul style that it was simply impossible to resolve this organic whole into its constituents. A revolutionary step taken by Shahjehan was the use of marble on a larger scale. The handling of this soft and fine stone required great care, restraint, skill and delicacy of touch so that not only the detailed work but the general design of buildings had to be considerably modified. To bring out the full bright effect of the marble it was necessary that the floral work should be fine and delicate and large marginal surfaces should be left blank.

The ornamental effect was largely achieved by beautiful designs worked in mosaic of multi-coloured stones. The arches could now be cut out in various geometrical shapes and pillars fashioned in novel and subtle designs. Domes could be made symmetrical with narrow delicate necks. Both in the designs of the buildings and in the ornamental work new, fine and beautiful effects were produced with curved lines. In short, the use of marble made it possible for the architect's work to compete with that of the painter in grace and delicacy and the Moghul architecture acquired new qualities which neither the Persian nor the old Indian styles had ever possessed. The co-operation of the Indian mind with the Persian and the bold experiment with Indian material created a new style in which the various elements are so completely blended into a harmonious whole, that now their analysis into Indian and foreign, even if it were possible would have no sense. The "dream in marble" known as Taj Mahal, whether it was built by an architect from Shiraz or Italy, remains a conception of the mind of an Indian king, a memorial to Indian love, built in Indian marble and the embodiment of the purity, peace and pathos of the Indian soul.

Painting also developed a new style during this period through the blending of the Turco-Iranian style with the old Indian style combining the charms of both. As we said, religious restrictions did not allow painting to flourish at the Muslim court during the period of the Delhi Sul-

tanate. But the art was developed by Hindu painters and was mostly used to illustrate books. The traditions of Ajanta had changed with the times giving place in Northern India to three medieval Indian styles—the Rajput, the Kangra and the Jammu styles. Of these the Rajput variety had made great progress under the patronage of the Rajput courts. The subjects of the Indian painters were generally taken from Hindu epic mythology—the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the legends about Sri Krishna, the personifications of musical tunes (*ragas* and *raginis*)—but rarely from the lives of common people. Their paintings present nature, in its myraid moods and colours simply but effectively. Complex and abstract motives were avoided.

The descendants of Timur were great lovers of painting even before they came to India. It was under their patronage that Persian art had gradually developed, and the Herat school of painting had reached its perfection in the art of the great master Bihzad. Mir Syed Ali and Khawaja Abdus Samad Shirazi the pupils of Bihzad came to India with Humayun. Their pictures show some Indian influence but the Turco-Iranian element prevails. Akbar who was an admirer of the realistic and forceful simplicity of the Hindu style wanted a new style to be created by combining the simplicity of the Hindu and the delicacy of the Persian schools. So he founded something like an academy of painting at his court where Indian and Persian artists worked together. The Persian masters Syed Ali and Abdus-Samad initiated their young pupils mostly Hindus, into the intricacies of Persian drawing and colouring. For theoretical education a library was provided which had a collection of books on art and masterpieces of old artists. Akbar himself visited the academy very frequently to see the artists at work. Of the products of this school the most famous are Daswant, Farrukh Beg, Basavan and Sanvala. They followed the old Indian custom of illustrating secular books and not religious books. In the beginning their style was after its Persian model—ornate, elaborate

and stiff, but gradually it acquired the liveliness, flow and vigour of the Indian style so that by the end of Akbar's and the beginning of Jehangir's reign an independent Moghul style had developed.

Jehangir was not only a patron of art but himself an artist and during his time Moghul painting reached its zenith. Farrukh Beg, Nadir, Mohammad Murad, Abul Hasan, Mansur, Bishen Das, Manohar and Daulat were the foremost artists of this period. Their scope had now extended far beyond the illustrations of old tales and legends and included actual battles, hunting, love, the courts of kings, the monasteries of Sufis, pictures of men, animals, plants and flowers—in short all aspects of human life and of nature which interested the emperor and his nobles.

Shahjehan was less interested in painting than in architecture. Still some of the princes and nobles patronized the art. But though painting had not lost its popularity, it had begun earlier than other arts to show signs of degeneration which is an inevitable result of the excess of wealth and luxury. More emphasis was now laid on superficial embellishment and decoration than on the deeper artistic qualities. No painting was regarded as complete without a broad surrounding border gilt and covered with fine and elaborate decorative work. Anup Chitra, Chitramāni, Faqirullah and Hashim Ali are the outstanding artists of the time of Shahjehan but none of them can be ranked with Mansur, Abdul Hasan and Manohar. Aurangzeb's religious austerity proved very discouraging to the art of painting and after him it deteriorated with the decline of the Moghul Empire.

As far as Music is concerned, a perfect harmony of taste and sentiment between Hindus and Muslims had already developed during the period of the Delhi Sultanate at the courts of the smaller independent states and the monasteries of the Sufis. So the Moghuls found a common or national musical art an accomplished fact and had nothing more to do than to foster and promote it through their generous patronage. Music is the medium in which

the deepest human feeling and experience express themselves without the help of intellectual concepts. The community of musical sense which was evident among Indians of all castes and creeds showed that the hearts of the people of India were now beating in unison and the unity of the fundamental cultural consciousness as a permanent basis for a common culture was assured.

As for the uniformity in general social life—in customs and manners, in food and dress, in enjoyments and amusements—which developed during this period, it is now too evident in the daily life of millions of Hindu and Muslim families to need any elaboration here.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE HINDUSTANI CULTURE—II

POLITICALLY the Moghul Empire reached the height of its glory during the first half of Aurangzeb's reign and then the process of decline began. Aurangzeb's wars of conquest in the Deccan emptied the treasury. His narrow-minded policy alienated the Rajputs who had been the most loyal friends of the Empire since the time of Akbar and raised three other hostile forces—the Sikhs, the Marathas and the Jats. As soon as the powerful personality of Aurangzeb disappeared from the scene, these four agencies—specially the Marathas—shook the foundations of the Empire from one end to the other. At the Moghul court the rivalries among the Turanian, the Persian and the Afghan parties weakened the central government to such a degree, that provincial governors became practically independent. Foreign invasions from the North-West which the power and prestige of the Moghul Empire had prevented for about two centuries, began anew. European traders who had come to India during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for trade, specially the East India Company of London exploited the unrest in the country to acquire partly by conquest and partly by political intrigues, large territories in India and began to play an important role in Indian politics.

Naturally, the Hindustani Culture reflected the degeneration which had set in but it continued to occupy the position of the common culture of India and even increased its sphere of influence. A new factor had, however, emerged in the cultural life of the country—the influence of Western culture through the European specially British traders, which imperceptible at first, began to show itself in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Hindustani Culture which developed during the reign of Akbar and his successors was essentially bound

up with the Moghul Empire and was directly affected by its decline but its decay was slower than that of the Empire and even during the period of political disintegration it continued to be the connecting link between different cultural groups and regions. No doubt it had lost its freshness, force and vitality and began to show signs of stagnation or rather deterioration but the sphere of its influence became wider. It worked from new centres like Lucknow, Hyderabad and Murshidabad, and served as the common culture of large sections of people throughout the country till the cataclysm of 1857 dealt it the death-blow, from which it never recovered.

The Persian language which was its medium of expression expanded during this period to new regions. Not only in the shrunken Moghul dominions but also in the virtually independent states of the Deccan, Bengal and Oudh, Persian was used in the Government offices in which very large numbers of employees were Hindus and all of them had a perfect command over Persian. The departments requiring special literary skill known as Dar-ul-Insha (Secretariat) was predominantly manned by Hindus so much so that in the eighteenth century the word "Munshi" had acquired the special sense of a Hindu who could write good Persian. Even in Hindu states like the Maratha Empire, which had modelled its whole administration upon the Moghul Empire, the official language was Persian. The East India Company had Persian as the official language till 1819 when it was declared to have been replaced by English. But in practice office work was done in Persian tilll long after that date. For literary and scientific purposes all educated Hindus as well as Muslims used Persian and even ordinary correspondence was carried on in that language.

From the point of view of literary and scientific progress it was a disappointing period. Though the number of books written was by no means less than in the preceding period their general level was much lower. The creative impulse as well as the spirit of enquiry was almost exhausted. The highest object of the scholars was now to follow

in the footsteps of their predecessors and to preserve what they had left behind. Their main activities were to compile dictionaries or omnibus lives and anthologies of poets. In the latter, Hindu writers had an equal and in the former a larger share than Muslim writers. Among the anthologists Ghulam Ali Azad and Lachmi Narayan Shafiq and among lexicographers Tekchand, the compiler of "Bahar-i-Ajam", Anand Ram Mukhlis of "Mirat-ul-Istilah" and Sirajuddin Khan Arzu of " Siraj-ul-Laught " are the best-known.

The numerous collections of literary epistles in Persian written in this period are almost all by Hindu Munshis. Their command over a foreign language is really astonishing. That there are deviations from the indigenous Persian idiom is natural and excusable. What is really unfortunate is that they follow the artificial bombastic style of Madho Ram instead of the simple chaste and racy diction of Brahman and Alamgir.

History and Biography show the same increase in quantity and deterioration in quality. Yet there are some honourable exceptions like the historical writings of Ghulam Ali Azad, and Lachmi Narain Shafiq and the Siyar-ul-Muta-akh Khirin of Ghulam Hussain. Works on philosophy, astrology, astronomy, mathematics and other sciences sometimes show erudition but seldom originality. The contribution of Hindus is in many fields as important as that of Muslims. The numerous translations from Sanskrit into Persian were done exclusively by Hindus.

In pure literature the glut of weird, extravagant romances which had taken the place of the epics of the time of Akbar reflects the degeneration of taste. The sensuous, phantastic imagination of the people eager to escape from the realities of life, had to be catered to by ingenious elegant nonsense like Bostan-i-Khayal. The Hindus seem to have been less infected with this unhealthy trend as they wrote comparatively few stories and most of these were historical tales or folktales. The poetry of the period is also a sad commentary on the intellectual and aesthetic decay which

had set in. The romanticism of Urfi and Naziri had also lacked simplicity and realistic substance. But it had at least the force of passion and the freshness of imagination. Now Bedil carried the subtlety of conceit and the extravagance of phantasy to such extremes that poetry was reduced to a kind of intellectual gymnastics. But it must be pointed out that though the generality of Hindu and Muslim poets followed Bedil, there were a few like his own pupil Anand Ram Mukkhlis, and masters like Azad, Arzu and Shafiq who did not succumb to the prevailing fashion.

It was in this period that the Urdu language made rapid progress and became, at least in the greater part of Northern India and the Deccan a rival to Persian as a literary language. The East India Company paid a tribute to its popularity by including it, along with English and the Western sciences, in the syllabus prescribed for the Fort William College, which was set up for the education of its civil servants. Urdu writers were employed to write books of general interest and made translations from Arabic and Sanskrit, in a simple and chaste language which was named Hindustani. Some of these books were written in Devnagari characters using a few Sanskrit words instead of the more difficult Arabic and Persian words. This helped in standardizing high Hindi which has now been accepted as the national language. Though the interest which the East India Company had taken in Urdu did not last long and the language of its administration continued to be Persian being finally replaced by English, the impetus which Urdu had received carried it forward through its own dynamic power so that it was made, along with English the official language in the North-West provinces comprising the present U. P. and part of the Punjab.

Architecture and the fine arts also suffered from the decline of the Moghul Empire. The court of Delhi—a prey to political intrigue and struggle—had neither the inclination nor the resources to extend its patronage to the arts. The smaller independent states did, in their small way,

encourage them but they could not inspire artists to do anything more than copy the old masters.

No great architecture could be produced during this period but the modest palaces, tombs, places of worship which were built show the general characteristics of the Moghul or Hindustani style. The palaces of the Rao of Jamnagar and the Raja of Chatarpur, the tombs of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore, of Maharao Umid Singh in Kotah and of Maharaja Bakhtawar Singh in Alwar, the Visheshwar Mandir in Benares and the Golden temple in Amritsar are all examples of this. Even the private residences of Hindu and Muslim noblemen which have escaped the ravages of time have exactly the same designs as the houses built during the reign of Shahjehan.

In painting, beside the proper Moghul style which flourished at the courts of Oudh and Hyderabad, the Jaipur, the Kangra and the Jammu styles which were considerably influenced by it, continued to develop in the Hindu states of Rajputana and the Punjab. In music the classical Hindu and the new mixed styles which had developed during the time of the Delhi and the Moghul Sultanates, were equally cultivated by the Hindu and Muslim states without any distinction and this art which gives the scope for the expression of the deeper human feelings, continued to give the most eloquent proof of the inner harmony of the Indian mind in spite of all the outward signs of discord.

The general uniformity in social life, food, dress, customs and manners which the Hindustani culture had produced among the upper class Hindus and Muslims, continued more or less undisturbed till the end of this period. Accounts of Indian life written by British or other European authors refer, along with regional and sectional cultures, to a common Hindustani culture. Much of the imposing superstructure built during the time of Akbar and his immediate successors was destroyed but the foundations were still intact.

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Whatever cultural influence the British had on Indian life during the period began after 1773, when the functions of government exercised by the East India Company in this country, came under the general control of the British Parliament and the Company began gradually to acquire the character of a civilized government while up to that time it had been no better than a band of ruthless commercial brigands to whom culture was an unknown commodity. Much of the unjustified hatred against the British which the Indians had entertained until Mahatma Gandhi dispelled it through his message of love, was a psychological survival of the terrible days of political chaos in India when the East India Company had a free hand to suck the blood of the helpless people.

So it was under the first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, that the company's administration was completely overhauled and the arrival of a better type of civil servants made cultural contact between the Indians and the British possible. Warren Hastings himself was an enlightened, broadminded and cultured man. He was the first British administrator to feel that his countrymen should know something of the history of cultural life of a land of which fortune had made them rulers and should help in preserving and promoting culture. At his instance, Ghulam Hussain wrote the *Siyar-ul-Muta-akhkhirin* which is the most authoritative history of the eighteenth century. Warren Hastings had a command not only of English and the European classics but also of Sanskrit and Persian. He had such a relish for the delicacy and sweetness of the Persian language that he once wrote to a friend suggesting that Persian language and literature should be included in the syllabus of the Oxford University and made part of the education of an English gentleman. He had the Muslim and Hindu religious laws codified in the modern way and translated into English with the help of Maulvis and Pandits. Under his patronage the Calcutta Madrasah was established in 1781 and the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal for

research in Oriental Studies, in 1784 under the president-ship of Sir William Jones.

The establishment of the Calcutta Madrasah and the Benares Sanskrit College was the first step taken by the East India Company to encourage education in the area under its administration. After that it set up the Fort William College for the training of its civil servants but paid no attention to public education for some time. In 1813, under the renewed charter which the Company received from the British Parliament, it was bound to spend Rs 1,00,000 every year on public education, but for the next ten years nothing was done as the controversy, whether this amount was to be spent on Oriental Education or on the teaching of the English language and Western Sciences, could not be settled. In 1823 the Company's administration decided to make official provisions only for the Oriental Education. So a committee on Public Instruction was set up to establish Colleges for the teaching of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, to publish text-books and to translate books on modern sciences from English into Oriental languages. Under this scheme two new institutions, the Agra College and the Delhi College, were set up.

But this scheme met with little success. Many orthodox Indians hesitated to send their young people to Government Colleges as they were afraid of an undesirable influence on their religious ideas. As for those who were prepared to get their sons educated, they were dominated by the motive of securing them government service and thought that the present government colleges which did not teach English would not serve their purpose. They had, with the help of a noble-minded Englishman, David Hare, already established the Hindu College (1817) in which English was taught along with Persian and Bengali. Now Babu Gour Mohun Audrey set up another institution of the same type under the name of Oriental Seminary. These two institutions were packed to capacity while very few students attended the Oriental colleges. In 1829, when English was declared to be the official language, the Oriental colleges

received a further set-back. In 1835 the old controversy was again revived and Lord Macaulay, the chairman of the Committee on Public Instruction wrote his famous note which is a remarkable achievement of brilliant advocacy, sparkling rhetoric, crass ignorance of Oriental culture and extreme narrow-mindedness. However, the Governor-General laid down, what proved to be permanent educational policy of the British in India, that the Government would henceforward promote the learning of the modern sciences and that English would not only be a compulsory subject in schools and colleges but the *medium of instruction*. With Primary Education the Company's Administration did not concern itself at all in spite of the fact that many old Maktabs had been closed down during the period of political unrest and economic distress. The Christian missionaries and some social-minded Indians opened a few primary schools in the area round Calcutta but they could not meet even a fraction of the general need. Industrial and vocational education was utterly neglected probably under the general policy of suppressing native handicrafts and industries. Medical education, however, did receive some attention and in addition to the medical schools in Calcutta (1807) in which the medium of instruction was Hindustani the Calcutta Medical College (1835) and the Bombay Grant Medical College (1845) were established with English as the medium of instruction.

So we see that the educational activity of the British during this period was so limited and unorganized that it could not have any influence worth mentioning, on the cultural life of India.

Much more important as an educative influence during this period than the establishment of a few colleges, was the introduction of the printing press and newspapers. Printing in English had been started probably soon after the coming of the British in India but the first newspaper appeared in Calcutta in the English language in 1770 under the title "Hick's Gazetter." Among Indian languages Bengali was the first to have its newspaper, *The Bengal Samachar* in 1816.

By the end of this period a number of newspapers in English and in the principal Indian languages appeared helping to widen the range of information of the Indian people and occasionally introducing new ideas.

As far as fine arts are concerned, the contribution of the Company's Government and the Anglo-Indian society of the period seems to have been very poor. The commercial mentality of the bulk of this society knew no other values except material profit and physical pleasure. Aesthetic sense was confined to a small circle of the better type of civil servants who could not do more than adorn their drawing-rooms with the copies or occasionally an original painting of Sir Joshua Reynolds, or Northcoote. Some Indian princes specially those of Oudh, now and then commissioned some European artists to paint a few pictures for them but this was not enough to give the necessary impetus to the progress of art in India. Amateur music, dance and drama were cultivated in Anglo-Indian society but they could not possibly be of a high level. Probably the court theatre of Wajid Ali Shah, the king of Oudh followed the stage arrangements of English theatre.

In architecture the East India Company continued till the beginning of the nineteenth century to copy the Portuguese style which was current in the European settlements in India. In the second half of this century many public buildings were built according to the designs of English engineers modelled on the buildings of London or other cities in England built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The front of the Calcutta cathedral (completed in 1787), is said to have been copied from the St Stephen's Church at Walbrook designed by the famous English architect Wren. Similarly the Government House (completed in 1802) is modelled after Keddleston Hall in Derbyshire. Most of the buildings of the first half of the nineteenth century are bad copies of the Renaissance style with classical frontage, spacious verandas and their long row of columns and gigantic porticoes. Occasionally Indians also built their houses in this style but the blending of the European

and Indian styles had not yet taken place. However the Lucknow building of the Asaf-ud-daulah period specially the Imam Bara and Rumi Darwazah owe their simple and well-proportioned design to the influence of Western architecture.

But the real and significant influence on Indian life was exercised by the technical aspect of Western civilization. The modern armaments and methods of military organization which helped the British to gain political domination in India made a deep impression and every Indian state adopted them as far as its resources allowed. Steamship service which started in 1823 or 1824 made travel by sea easier and encouraged Indians to visit foreign lands and this helped them to broaden their views. Towards the end of this period gaslight, railway and telegraph were introduced into the country. The first railway was opened between Bombay and Thana in 1853 and between Calcutta and Raniganj in 1855. The telegraph line began to operate from Calcutta to Bombay, Madras and Attock in 1854.

In short, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century Western Culture had begun to exercise some influence in a limited area on a certain section of Indians but it was not enough to bring about any appreciable change in the general cultural life of the country. The people of India, as yet, had no opportunity to look into the spirit of Western Culture. What they had seen of it was brought by Christian missionaries or trading rulers and it appeared to them dangerous for their religion, their political freedom and their economic welfare. So their attitude to Western Culture was much the same as to the political and economic domination of the British and their intense aversion against this culture was one of the causes of the Revolt of 1857. Before discussing the impact of the English variety of Western Culture on India it would be useful to look into some of the essential features of that culture.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE ENGLISH AND THEIR CULTURE

INDIA'S CONTACT with Europe began in 1498 when Vasco da Gama discovered the sea-route to India round the Cape of Good Hope. Before that there had been trade between India and the European countries through the Syrians and the Arabs but no direct relations. No doubt India came in touch with the Greeks once during the reign of Darius the Great when the North-Western part of India and the Greek settlements in Asia Minor were both parts of the Persian Empire, and again after the invasion of India by Alexander the Great when Greek satraps ruled over a small area in the Punjab. But the first contact was too slight and the second too brief to have any influence on Indian life. So for all practical purposes, direct relations between India and Europe can be said to have started from the end of the fifteenth century. During the next three hundred and fifty years the Portuguese, Danish, Dutch, French and British traders struggled for political and commercial supremacy. In the end the British won the field and, in addition to a monopoly of the sea-borne trade with India, acquired virtual rulership of vast areas in the country. But as we remarked in the previous chapter, it was only after 1773 that they began to exercise some little cultural influence on a small section of Indians in the face of great opposition from the people as a whole. After the Revolt of 1857, however, there was a sudden and complete change in the cultural situation and, as we shall see later, the stabilization of British rule in India was accompanied by a gradual domination of the life of at least some classes, by Western Culture. Before surveying this revolutionary change, we would do well to learn something about the character of the English people who were now the masters of India and about the Western Culture which they brought with them.

To the North-West of the continent of Europe lies the the island of Great Britain. The Northern part of this island forms Scotland and the Southern, England and Wales. England which is the hub, not only of Britain and the United Kingdom, but of the whole British Commonwealth of Nations is a small irregular triangle narrower at the apex and wider at the base. North England is, like Scotland, a hilly region. The South comprises fertile plains interspersed with low ranges of hills and mounds. Numberless rivers and streams flow serenely on level ground. The climate is milder than that of any other country in Northern Europe, but extremely changeable. There is neither intense cold nor unpleasant heat : heavy rains or wind-storms are not frequent. Yet the weather changes so suddenly and so quickly that the general mood which it induces is not that of complacency but of uncertainty. You begin the day with a foggy, murky, stuffy dawn which suddenly swings to a windy morning. In a moment the wind dies down and you are enjoying a clear warm pleasant noon. Then there is a violent break, the clouds forming as if by magic and bursting into a drenching rain making it necessary during the afternoon to heat the room. Obviously, the people living in such a climate have to be alert, active, adaptable and resourceful. Morever, as the country is full of wild animals and birds, and hunting has always been the favourite hobby of Englishmen, they have developed hardiness, patience, watchfulness, caution and that peculiar quality called " the sporting spirit " which consists in carrying on doggedly the fight against the adversary so long as there is the slightest chance of success but when failure appears to be certain admitting defeat openly and bearing it with calm dignity. This requires daring, moral courage, fortitude, and restraint which the better type of Englishman generally possesses—specially the last quality in which nobody can excel him. This restraint, however, is not wholly due to his physical and moral strength, but in part also to his intellectual and emotional slowness.

Like other Northern people Englishmen generally lack imagination, and the current of their feelings runs slowly and quietly in deeper channels. Their response to a stimulus is tardy and, however strong it may be, appears to the average observer as weak and halting. It means that restraint comes natural to them and it does not require much effort on their part to observe moderation in speech and action. This moderation often expresses itself in irony and humour which are regarded to be distinctive features of their national character and literature. The English irony usually consists in understatement or overstatement. Where others fume or fret or bewail their troubles, the Englishman tries to cover up his anger or his sorrow in an ironical smile. He expresses his condemnation through exaggerated praise and his approbation through a slight deprecation. But what is most remarkable and interesting about him, is his bashfulness, awkwardness and ironical modesty when he has to speak about his merits or achievements. So his irony is not a weapon for attacking others but a cover for his own feelings. Even if he has to use it as an offensive weapon, he usually takes care not to poison it with hatred but to temper it with humour. The most important purpose of English humour is to mitigate the chagrin caused by an unpleasant or ugly thing by diverting attention to its ridiculous aspect. Another use to which humour is generally put is to pull up a person, be he a lunatic or a philosopher, a criminal or a reformer, who has deviated from the beaten track in thought or action. In short, English humour and irony appear at their best as philosophical moderation and heroic patience and at their worst as philistine conventionalism or rustic lack of imagination.

In fact the rustic characteristics of the peasants' culture, which dominated the whole of Europe during the Middle Ages, survived in England long after they had disappeared or been considerably modified in other countries, because being an island it was cut off from cultural movements which started on the mainland and reached here very late, if at all.

To some extent the basic qualities of a peasant community are permanently ingrained in English character. The most prominent example is the English respect for traditions. Their state has no written constitution, everything being determined by unwritten tradition. In general very few statutes exist for regulating public affairs. For the most part they are carried on according to customary practice and usage. Like peasants, Englishmen make no difference between religious commandments, moral principles, social customs and family traditions regarding all as equally sacred. Their proverbial unsociability, their slow response to friendly overtures, their aversion to strangers, their firm belief that theirs is the only culture in the world and all peoples are to be judged by their standards, are all expressions of their rustic narrow-mindedness.

These are the fundamental traits of the English character which had developed through racial and climatic influences in the ancient period when none of the races—Iberians, Celts, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, etc—of which they were composed, had passed the primitive stage. The first civilized people with whom they came in contact, were the Romans who gave them law and order but could not exercise any appreciable influence on their cultural life. More fruitful were the three centuries of Norman rule which tamed and civilized the people of England. The Normans had brought with them the code of chivalry which was blended with the native rustic virtues of the indigenous people to form the concept of "gentleman"—the English version of the Medieval Knight.

The movement of the revival of classical learning known as the Renaissance which had inspired a new cultural life on the continent had spent much of its force before it reached England. No doubt a great creative wave of art and literature with Shakespeare at its crest, rose during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. But the intellectual awakening produced by the Renaissance, was confined to a very small section. The English people in general, reacted to the new mpulse not in cultural but in practical life. It stimulated

them to daring achievements in the field of navigation and piracy and encouraged them to hold their own in their struggle to defend their national freedom against adversaries much stronger than themselves. They produced great personalities like Elizabeth, Drake, Raleigh who defied the might of Spain and like Henry VIII who broke the chains of England's religious bondage to Rome and established the independent national Church of England.

The rationalistic movement of Enlightenment which swept Germany and France in the eighteenth century left England almost untouched. The only effect which modern Rationalism had upon the English was that it defined the basic principles of their culture more clearly and integrated them into something like a philosophy of life which had three important components : the epistemological concept of Empiricism, the ethical concept of Utilitarianism and the political idea of Liberalism or individual liberty which the influence of Puritanism developed into more or less a religious faith which was preached all over the world with missionary zeal.

In the nineteenth century the basic principles of English Culture gained both in depth and breadth. Specially the principle of individual liberty was extended to cover the whole national life. Every individual of every class was given, in principle, the same fundamental rights including those of freedom of thought, speech, movement and association. In the economic field the idea of freedom led to capitalism which is the extreme form of individualism. The capitalistic system, though it was spreading rapidly over the whole of the Western world after the Industrial Revolution had its greatest success in the nineteenth century in England because the national temperament here was pre-eminently suited to it.

The political system in England underwent great changes during the first half of this century. The exclusive rule of the aristocratic class was ended. Not only the middle but also the "lower" classes shared political rights equally with them. The cultural and material goods remained on the

whole, the monopoly of the upper and upper middle classes. Still the common people had to be given a pittance to keep them quiet. This required some extension of the authority of the state and the corresponding limitation of individual liberty. So the state made laws for regulating the wages of labourers, the use of land and the building of houses, imposed new taxes, introduced free and compulsory education and generally began to encroach on various fields of individual life. But these changes were made slowly and cautiously so that the links with the past were not broken. The idea of individual liberty was not given up. But the the new idea of the national state and its supremacy also established itself and had to be reconciled with the former.

These outward changes reflected the inner transformation which the English mind was undergoing. The rigour of the Puritan belief was now changing its direction and widening its point of view and scope of activity. It did not now express itself in religious austerity, but in the political enthusiasm for nationalism. Its ideal now was not the mere prosperity of the pious trader, but the freedom, the material well-being, the mental and moral elevation of the whole nation, the establishment of its supremacy and the propagation of its culture, specially its democratic institutions over the largest possible area. This movement which took at home the form of English patriotism and abroad that of British Imperialism, was now the substitute for religious activity. By no means did the English give up Christianity but it was no more their passion. Few people believed in dogma and fewer still in outward devotion. In England now as in other European countries, the keystone of social life was not religion but the state, though it was a democratic and constitutional state, not an absolute one as in Germany.

Though the English are pre-eminently a practical people and their genius and destiny realized itself in their state, their achievements in other fields were by no means inconsiderable. Though as a people they lagged behind the Italians, the French and the Germans in the cultivation of

philosophy and the fine arts, yet individual English philosophers and artists won prominent places for themselves in the world of mind and their works are among the best achievements of, not only the European, but the whole human culture.

It is basic characteristic of the English mind that instead of making life subservient to abstract ideas, it makes ideas serve needs of practical life. In fact knowledge has no independent place in the system of English values but is regarded as a means to other values like pleasure, power, etc. So the goal which knowledge kept before itself in England was not the search for Truth but the attainment of human well-being. That is why there is practically no Metaphysics in English philosophy. But Logic, Epistemology, Ethics and specially Political philosophy found a congenial climate in England.

It is due to the lack of pure philosophical speculation, that, with the possible exception of Hobbes and Herbert Spencer, we do not find in the thought of any English philosopher that inner sequence and unity which is necessary to build up a comprehensive system. Still a survery of the whole philosophical thought of the English reveals two distinct currents representing two opposite tendencies in the national character. The main current is that of positivism represented by empirical Epistemology and utilitarian Ethics which springs from a realistic and practical attitude to life. But there is a side current of idealism originating from that imponderable element in English character which expresses itself in the forms of Puritanism in the religious and Imperialism in the political field.

The starting-point of the former—the positivistic—line of thought was sensuous experience through which considerable success was achieved in acquiring the knowledge of natural phenomena and their relations to one another. i. e. in the field of physical sciences. But in the search for the reality behind the phenomena that is in the metaphysical field this method was not used and in fact could not be used. Only one thinker Hobbes, stepped beyond

the limits of the world of experience to support the materialistic and mechanistic metaphysical theory. Newton also had a mechanistic point of view but he confined his speculations to mathematics and did not meddle with philosophy. All the other great thinkers Locke, Hume, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer kept themselves within the natural confines of empiricism.

The ethical theories worked out on the basis of the empirical method have one thing in common—they all regard pleasure as the highest moral good. But views differ on the question whether this highest moral value is represented by individual or by collective pleasure. The protagonists of Egoism regard the pleasure of the individual and those of utilitarianism like Bentham, Hume, John Stuart Mill, etc. "the greatest good of the greatest number" as the aim of moral action.

In political philosophy several theories were built on the empirical foundation. Hobbes used Rousseau's "social contract" to justify absolute monarchy. According to him "in the state of nature", that is before the emergence of any political organization people were living a "brutish and nasty" life of eternal warfare. So they appointed a ruler to whom they surrendered their "natural rights" on the condition that he would protect their lives. Locke, on the contrary, conceived of "the state of nature" as one of freedom combined with peace and the "social contract" as an agreement among people to set up a political organization which would preserve both collective peace and individual freedom and other "natural rights". Hume rejected the basic ideas of "natural rights" and "social contract" on which both Hobbes and Locke had based their theories. To him government is an attempt to reconcile not the rights but "the interests of the individual" to "common good" which is the moral ideal. Bentham developed both the moral and the political theories of Utilitarianism winning for it the position of the national English Philosophy. Under his influence Ricardo applied the principle of Utilitarianism to Economics, James Mill to English constitution

and Austin to Law. John Stuart Mill who was an enthusiastic protagonist of individual liberty though not directly opposed to the Utilitarian theory of the state, laid so much emphasis on limiting the functions of the state and widening the scope of individual liberty that nothing was left of political Utilitarianism than the name. Herbert Spencer based his political theory on Biology and taking the state for "a social organism" tried to prove that as the functions of the various members of the individual organism have been gradually defined in the course of evolution, so also the members of the social organism, i.e. individuals should be given more and more freedom till the state ceases to have any control over their lives. Later, Spencer realized that there was no analogy between the state and the social organism and even if there were it could not yield the consequence which he had drawn from it. So he was forced to use the worn-out theory of "natural right" to defend his political individualism. The individualistic doctrines of Spencer were sharply criticized not only by idealists but also by empiricists. So the conflict between individualism and collectivism continued in the moral and political philosophy of Englishmen as well as in their actual life.

Against the general positivistic trend of ideas an idealistic approach has been trying to assert itself in the various fields of English thought. In Epistemology its protagonists oppose intuitionism to empiricism. According to them the original source of human knowledge are inborn ideas with which every person is endowed by nature. These idealists are more interested in metaphysical questions than the positivists. But very few of them have expressed their ideas in a systematic philosophical form. Berkeley was perhaps the only one who propounded a regular idealistic theory. But more important and valuable is the contribution of this line of thinkers to moral philosophy which exercised a deep influence on the upper classes in England. Though their moral theories differ from one another yet there is one common characteristic—that they do not

recognize mere pleasure or utility but some immaterial eternal value as the highest norm of moral conduct. For Cudworth it is the ideal concepts of things, for Clarke the logical order of the Universe and for Shaftesbury artistic harmony.

In Politics also the idealistic trend was fairly important. The famous statesman Edmund Burke was the first to show a leaning towards idealism. He did not formulate a regular theory of the state but emphasized in his rhetorical way that the state was a sacred super-individual institution and whatever its origin might have been, it had in course of time become indispensable to social and moral life and independent of the will of the individuals. But the real idealistic movement in English political thought started under the influence of Kant and Hegel and its most prominent representatives were Greene, Bradley and Bosanquet. Though their writings did not attract much attention generally, their influence over Oxford, which produced most of the English statesmen and national leaders—and thus over political life in the country—was considerable. In fact the great change which the political system in England underwent in the nineteenth century was largely due to them. It was the impulse created by their teachings which diverted the puritanic passion of the English towards nationalism and a national state, making the latter unconsciously the object of popular veneration and increasing its powers day by day. Bradley and Bosanquet confined themselves mainly to the interpretation of Hegel's Political philosophy but Greene tried to reconcile the ideas of Hegel with those of Kant and to make political idealism acceptable to the English mind by giving individualism its due place in his theory. He recognizes the importance of state and society but he thinks that the object of both is to give the personality of the individual full scope for development. Also with regard to functions of the state Greene strikes the middle path. He admits that the state has to embody the political ideal in a particular code of law and a particular form of society, and

through education and other social institutions to discipline the individuals so that they are able to realize their moral ideals. But he makes it quite clear that the function of the state is merely to remove the obstacles. It would be disastrous for it to aspire after more. The moral progress of each individual depends on his own voluntary effort.

This moderate idealistic and collectivistic conception of the state acted as a powerful counterpoise to the one based on the individualism of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer and the utilitarianism of Bentham in the history of English political thought and was later reinforced by the emergence of Socialism as a political philosophy as well as a movement.

But far richer and deeper than the logical thought of the English people, was their emotional and imaginative thought which expressed itself in the priceless treasure of English literature and poetry. Though in fine arts in a narrower sense England has great names to conjure with like that of Wren in architecture, Purcell in music, Constable, Turner, Reynolds and Hogarth in painting, yet this is not enough to controvert the general opinion that the English mind touches merely the surface of the fine arts and hesitates to go deeper into them. Really the shy and vague imagination and the deep, slow but lasting feeling of Englishmen could express itself best in poetry and literature and this was the field in which they excelled as a people. Shakespeare to whom we referred as the herald of the modern age is universally acknowledged to be a great dramatist, Byron and Pope stand alone in their own spheres of satirical verse. In epic poetry Milton's *Paradise Lost* ranks with the works of Homer, Virgil, Firdausi and Dante and in lyrical poetry there is a whole galaxy of great poets from Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats and Tennyson to later poets which has perhaps no parallel in any language except Persian. It seems that the emotions which find no outlet in the life of the English people are cultured in the minds of their poets into sparkling pearls of poetry.

The novel is generally believed to be almost the exclusive

creation of the English mind. It is true, at least, to this extent that from the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century, i.e. before the appearance of the Russian novel the English novel monopolized the literary field in Europe and America. In fact, the English novel begun by Fielding, Smollet, Richards and Sterne and developed by an unbroken line of writers such as Jane Austen, Bronte, George Eliot, Thackeray, Trollope, Meredith and Hardy was a way of observing life peculiar to Englishmen. The love of the spiritual as well as material aspects of existence, which is the sign of a healthy people, a deep interest in life's everchanging moods and kaleidoscopic scenes, a special variety of humour which is a complex of fellow-feeling, sympathy, satire and ridicule, the sense of proportion which guards against sentimentalism and exaggeration—all these things combined to lend the eighteenth and nineteenth century English novel a charm which is all its own. It is seen at its best in the best works of Charles Dickens which like Shakespearean Drama show in the lives of mortal men a glimpse of immortal life.

This is a bare outline of some aspects of the English culture, as it had developed up to the middle of the nineteenth century on which the new rulers of India had been nurtured.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH CULTURE ON INDIA (1857—1920)

OUT OF the chaos caused by the disintegration of the Moghul empire gradually emerged the outlines of British India. Along with the political domination of the British some influences of English culture were in the face of great opposition, slowly asserting themselves. The new rulers seemed, up to the first quarter of the eighteenth century, to have no intention of imposing their culture on India. On the contrary they were themselves trying to adopt the Indian way of living as far as they could. The educational policy of Warren Hastings had aroused the hope that instead of suppressing Indian culture, the English would try to revive it by infusing a new intellectual as well as practical spirit. But in the later twenties of the nineteenth century this policy was completely reversed. English was made the official language and later the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Now the doors of state service and social recognition by the ruling class began to close on those who had been educated in the Oriental seminaries. As the new government acquired fresh territories and extended this educational and cultural policy over them, the number of those who resented the "devaluation" of the indigenous education and culture, on sentimental as well as economic grounds, increased. The situation was further aggravated when Lord Dalhousie (the British Governor-General of India, 1848-1856) liquidated all at once many Indian states under indigenous rulers and thus deprived thousands of people with Oriental education, of their last refuge. Moreover, traders and artisans were no less discontented as foreign imports handled mainly by Europeans, were driving the products of indigenous industry out of the market. So a general wave of economic unrest and cultural prejudice spread over the country being

strongest in the valley of the Ganges and Central India where British rule had been only recently established and not yet taken firm roots. It was here that Indian sepoys employed by the British, started the Mutiny in 1857 which raged for about a year. When it was finally put down, the British supremacy was established with enhanced prestige on a firm foundation over the whole of India.

II

The Government which was now established was that of the British Parliament which had wound up the East India Company and cleared the hitherto obscure legal situation by making India a dependency of Great Britain.

Beginning with Lord Canning a number of successive Viceroys strove to establish peace and order, improve the administration of the country and, to a slight extent, the lot of the people whom a century and a half of almost chaotic conditions had reduced to a miserable state. Lord Curzon (1898-1905) was the last Viceroy who could concentrate on administrative reforms. His successors had to give most of their attention to dealing with the movement for political freedom which had started with the organization of political-minded Indians in 1885 in the Indian National Congress so that the activities of the government were now dominated by one motive—to find ways of pacifying Indians by giving them the shadow of self-rule instead of the substance. The political agitation came to a head with the partition of Bengal into two provinces which was designed to limit the sphere of growing political activities of the educated classes in Calcutta, and West Bengal, and indirectly to strike at the general political movement in the country. That is why throughout India the politically conscious elements supported the agitation against the partition of Bengal. This movement continued till King George V announced the cancellation of the partition at the Delhi Durbar of 1911. Though at the same time the Bengalis were in a way punished for their defiance of the British

power by the transfer of the capital of India from their city Calcutta to the far away Delhi, yet it was clear that the foreign Government in India was more impressed by organized direct action than mere constitutional protest.

Earlier Lord Minto, who succeeded Lord Curzon as Viceroy, had tried with the co-operation of the liberal Secretary of State for India Lord Morley, to satisfy the "moderate" section of the Indian National Congress by enforcing the Act of Indian Legislatures of 1909, which increased the number of Indian representatives in the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils. But as these councils were mere debating societies without any real powers, the new act did not meet with the approval of any section of Indian politicians. On the contrary they were all—"moderates" as well as "extremists"—rightly alarmed by the ominous provision of the act which gave special representation through *separate electorates*, to vested interests as well as religious minorities, thus giving a definite and permanent shape to the amorphous separatist tendencies in the country. While moderate political leaders like Gokhale confined themselves to constitutional protest, the extremists started more vigorous demostrations which Lord Minto tried to put down by repressive laws and Lord Morley through pacification. But these demonstrations continued unabated.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, Congress leaders voluntarily stopped their political agitation hoping that now the Indian political problem was sure to receive favourable attention from the British Government. They actually co-operated with the war effort of the Government of India. In the atmosphere of better relations thus created both wings of the Congress and the Muslim League, the political organization of moderate Muslim politicians established a few years earlier, met in Lucknow in 1916 and formulated some proposals about the future political reforms in India and made a joint effort to get public support for these proposals. This resulted in the Declaration of 1917 made in the British House of Commons by

Lord Montague, the Secretary of State for India, that Indians would be given a progressively larger share in the government of their country. To honour this promise the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act of 1919, the really important provision of which was a substantial devolution of power from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy. But there was very little in it to meet the national aspirations of India. The two chambers of the Central Legislature and the Provincial Legislatures with the majority of non-official members, the elected Indian Ministers in the provinces with some powers over Education, Health, Public Works and Local Self-Government, served merely as a facade. The real power remained in the hands of the Viceroy and the provincial Governors.

Indian nationalists who had fondly entertained great hopes after the Declaration of 1917 were now sadly disappointed and realized for the first time that the path leading from the promises of the British Government to their fulfilment was not straight and smooth but had to pass through windings of political expediency and negotiate ups and downs of party government. Only the small moderate group of the Congress decided to avail themselves of the limited opportunity now offered to get administrative experience. They left the Congress, formed themselves into the National Liberal Federation and accepted office as ministers in the provincial Governments. But the National Congress as a body persisted in its policy of opposition. In fact its opposition increased enormously in extent and intensity owing to some new circumstances. Thus began a new era in the political and cultural history of India of which we shall speak in the next chapter.

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Though in the first half of the nineteenth century the political supremacy of the British had been established in India the English variety of Western culture, which the new rulers had brought with them, had not yet made any

deep impression on the Indian mind. The only aspect of Western civilization which had excited the wonder and admiration of the people in general was its technical progress represented by railway, telegraph, etc. The reason why English culture had failed to exercise any influence except over a very small section of Indians in Calcutta or a few other big cities was threefold: (1) Indians were still perfectly satisfied with their own culture and did not think it needed any change. They had not realized that their political deterioration was to some extent due to their intellectual and moral degeneration that their cultural life was suffering from stagnation so that any stimulus from outside which could stir it up should be welcomed. (2) Unfortunately the bracing tonic which English culture offered them was polluted with the taint of political and economic subjection so they could not relish it. (3) Excepting a few like Lord Macaulay, the Englishmen who were in India had not yet been affected by the new superiority complex which had recently developed in England. They loved profit and power but were to a large extent free from national and racial pride. They were not conscious of "the white man's burden" and did not feel themselves called upon to civilize the coloured people. In fact English administrators of the old school like Sleeman who believed in riding roughshod over Indians politically, had a respect for the refinement, culture and scholarship of Indian, specially Muslim, gentlemen with purely Oriental education. In short, in spite of the Government policy of Westernization of education initiated by Macaulay, the generality of Englishmen did not try in those days to impose their culture on Indians but were, to some extent, themselves influenced by Indian culture.

After 1857 the whole picture suddenly changed. The realization of their utter political impotence gave such a terrible shock to Indians that their faith in their own culture was shaken. Their rulers too with their traditional contempt for all physical and moral weakness, were now looking down on Indians and their culture. Specially when the new generation of English civil servants sincerely

believing in their racial and cultural superiority and their holy imperialistic mission, came to India and saw the whole country benumbed and bowed down by terror, there was no doubt in their minds that they had to deal with a depressed people whom it was their sacred duty to uplift through Western education and culture. Among Indians, besides mercenary sycophants who had always existed, there were now many who sincerely supported British rule and Western culture. They had realized that none but the British could grapple with the political chaos in India and establish peace and order; also that the Medieval Indian culture was now out of date and could not meet the economic, political and intellectual demands of the present age, so India had to learn from the rulers something of the modern Western culture which had helped them to their present prosperity and power. There were still many opponents of foreign intellectual and political domination but they no longer dared to come out in the open. Their only refuge where they could be safe from the wrath of the Government was religion. So they were living a retired life in religious schools and monasteries. But generally those members of the old, middle and higher classes who had survived the political deluge and the new upper class which this very deluge had raised to prominence were willing to submit to the new political and cultural dispensation. Hindus who had better capacity to adjust themselves to changing circumstances made a rush to the new "English" schools. Muslims, on the other hand, kept aloof from Western education till the enlightened leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan showed them the wisdom of keeping abreast of the times. So the Government of India had now no reason to revise its educational and cultural policy, which had been one of the causes of the Revolt of 1857 but decided to enforce it more systematically and thoroughly with the help of a large section of Indians. Apparently this policy succeeded in its object and an indigenous imitation of English culture was produced which began gradually to displace the Hindustani culture.

The new educational and cultural policy had a superficial resemblance with that of Akbar in so far as it envisaged a uniform culture making for political unity, based on a common loyalty to the state. But the fundamental difference was that the state for which Akbar wanted to train loyal citizens was one in which all people had, under the absolute sovereignty of the king, equal status and equal rights without any distinction of caste or creed. No doubt the ruling family had come from a foreign land but it had settled down in this country and made it its home. Akbar and most of his successors did their best to establish direct contact between the king and his subjects and make them feel that he was an embodiment of their sentiments and aspirations. But the "state" round which the British wanted to rally Indians was strictly speaking, not a state at all, but a dependency of the United Kingdom, a subject country nominally ruled by the King-Emperor but actually by the British Parliament that is, the whole British nation. This means that Indians now owed allegiance not to one person or one dynasty but to a whole nation—to a nation which knew nothing about their history and their culture, their aspirations and their sentiments; which lived at a distance of several thousand miles and could not be approached or influenced by them. The representatives of this ruling nation in India had made themselves now almost equally unapproachable by breaking off whatever social relations they had so far had with the subject people. The natural consequence of this policy was that in the cultural field too, the British aimed at domination instead of reconciliation. They did not attempt like Akbar a blending of their culture with that of India and a social contact on equal terms but tried to impose from above (keeping themselves socially aloof) as much of Western education and culture on the people of India as they thought was good for them.

In fact the intrinsic merit of Western culture, apart from the glamour that everything associated with the ruling nation has for a subject people, lay in the modern scientific

attitude of mind and practical efficiency. But unfortunately the way in which the fresh blood of modernism was transfused into the anaemic body of Indian society allowed just these vital ingredients to be lost and on the whole did more harm than good to the patient.

In the first place the modern Western culture which reached India was not the genuine article but an export model of which the parts came from England and were assembled in India mainly by men of mediocre ability, who could be spared for India from among those who were left over after selecting political and intellectual leaders for the home country. These were people sent at a very young age, thousands of miles away from the centre of their culture, away from the atmosphere of intellectual freedom to rule over hundreds of millions of voiceless, uncomplaining people for their own good, to make them loyal subjects of the British Government and reliable buyers of British goods, and incidentally to build up in their spare time a new educational system and create a new cultural world.

It must be said in all fairness that for about half a century these pioneers of the British Empire, specially many members of the Civil and Educational Services, worked with missionary zeal, not only to build up an efficient administration but also to enrich as far as they could within the limits of a Medieval agricultural society, the country under their charge with the mental as well as the material blessings of Western culture.

But obviously the unfavourable climate and the uncongenial social atmosphere of an outlying country could not be expected to attract great scholars and artists from England and other Western countries to help in building up a genuine Western culture. The result was that the work had to be done by amateurs, that is, by British officials and businessmen who could not achieve more than an imitation of stale English fashions in dress and furniture, art and architecture and the general way of living and thinking. The culture which emerged in this way should not really be called English or Western culture at all but an Indian

variety of the Colonial Culture which was springing up in the colonies and dependencies of Western powers in Asia and Africa.

Moreover, even this "Ersatz" English culture could not be properly transmitted to Indians owing to the racial pride and the unsociability of its British, specially English representatives in India. The intrinsic difficulty faced by foreign rulers in playing the role of teachers and reformers in a subject country was aggravated by the fact that the teachers regarded it as beneath their dignity to have any social contact with the taught without which no real education is possible. So when the Indians, looking from a respectful distance, tried to see English culture embodied in the life of the Englishmen in India they could only get a glimpse of superficial phenomena like dress, food, and the general outward way of living, or their unsociability and what appeared to be their religious scepticism and materialism, and in all these things the devoted cultural disciples tried as best as they could to imitate their masters. The basic qualities of English character—self-respect, self-control, strength of will combined with adaptability, moral courage, the spirit of "the sportsman" and "the gentleman" and those characteristics of modernism which the English shared with other Western people—like the scientific spirit of inquiry, and the will to harness the forces of nature into the sevice of human happiness, remained hidden from the eyes of most Indians and had no influence on their life. Lord Macaulay had hoped that the study of English and modern sciences would produce a class of people Indian in appearance but European in spirit. What actually happened was that many educated Indians became imitation Englishmen in outward appearance but in the moral and intellectual spheres they were either totally uninfluenced by English character or assimilated its worst features which turned them into unprincipled, unbalanced, denationalized individualists.

In short, the new culture which a section of the upper and middle class Indians tried to evolve under the influence

of the colonial English civilization was a common but not a national culture. It produced a degree of uniformity among educated Indians but not the inner unity which is born of the community of faith in the higher values of life. Nevertheless as it was of service in shaking up the Indian mind out of its torpid slumber we have to take some notice of it.

But we must make two things clear to avoid any misunderstanding. First, that what we are describing here is not the cultural life of the English or the Europeans in India but that of the Anglicised or Westernised Indians who tried to imitate them and secondly that the description does not apply to all educated Indians who had the benefit of Western education as they included many good and great men who took a leading part in the political liberation and cultural regeneration of the country.

As we said before, the colonial English culture in India was built round the state but a peculiar kind of state the like of which India had never known in her whole history. She had seen the Hindu religious State, the Buddhist moral State and the Mughal cultural State which had more or less the same constitutional nature—sovereignty being vested in a single individual, the Raja or King and all people without any distinction having the same political status as his subjects. The pivot of social and cultural life used to be the royal court. In addition to executive judicial and legislative functions the king also had manifold cultural functions like social reform, moral censorship, dispensation of charities, patronage of learning, arts and crafts and even the laying down of fashions in dress and manner. The centre of gravity of the state was even during the reign of the Muslim Kings inside the country. But the state which the British had now set up was in every way different from the traditional Indian state. As a matter of fact it was not a state at all but a subordinate administration without sovereign powers. Sovereignty was vested nominally in the King-Emperor, but actually in the British Parliament which had delegated most of its authority to the Viceroy who

discharged the functions of government with the help of the civil service. This service was for a long time exclusively composed of foreigners who considered themselves racially and culturally superior to the natives and expressed this superiority in every possible way so that the very word "native" came to be used as a term of contempt. Obviously under these circumstances there was no possibility of that understanding between the rulers and the ruled which is indispensable for good government. We have already admitted that the British Civil servants who came out to India after 1857 made on the whole an earnest and in some cases a heroic attempt to establish peace and order, to run the administrative and judicial system with integrity and efficiency and to improve the lot of the people. But their efforts generally failed to achieve the desired success partly on account of an atmosphere of mutual estrangement and suspicion between them and the people, partly because the economic policy of their government to which we shall refer later was intrinsically incapable of leading to genuine prosperity and peace.

As far as the cultural function is concerned the government did not take any appreciable interest in promoting cultural activities beyond providing education through a foreign tongue to a very limited number of people. The cultural and social life of the rulers themselves was a sanctum forbidden to the subjects—not a light-house to guide them. These rulers did have a consciousness of their duty to carry to the benighted people Western light and learning but they thought that by teaching Indians English literature, modern philosophy and sciences they would put them on the way to Western culture. The cultural clearing-house of the type which the Moghul Court had maintained could not be set up by the British as it required imagination as well as sociability which they did not possess.

So this, impersonal, non-cultural, non-sovereign, state could not make any direct contribution to Indian culture. But it gave us peace and order and what was still more valuable and more significant for our future political and

cultural development, a new conception of individual and national freedom and a preliminary training in the democratic technique of public life. Lord Ripon was the first Viceroy (1880-1884) who introduced the principle of representative government at the Municipal Board and District Board level and thus provided Indians with an opportunity of learning rudiments of the technique of modern democracy. Moreover he awakened in their minds the sentiment of political equality by conceding to them through the much disputed Ilbert Bill legal equality with Europeans. It was the impulse created by the violent controversy over this bill which led to the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, to which we have already referred. If the liberal policy of Lord Ripon had been continued by his successors it is just possible that the way to a political and also to a cultural understanding would have been found and a new national state and national culture would have been evolved in India with the co-operation and under the guidance of the British. But this liberal policy underwent a radical change when the rapid growth of the movement for political freedom demanded substantial transfer of power from British into Indian hands. All further concessions had to be wrung from the British Government through nation-wide agitation which later took the form of passive resistance and these concessions always came just too late to satisfy the people even for a short time. The reason why the British, in spite of their traditional love of political liberty, denied it to Indians was that their economic interests forced them to hold on to the power in India as long as it was possible.

To understand the economic policy of the British Indian Government which acted as a drag on its political policy it must be remembered that it was a successor to the East India Company and its most important object was to find an assured market for goods as well as a safe field of investment for British capital. One of the reasons why British public opinion had criticized the East India Company and led the Government to subject it to more and more restric-

tions, was that the few shareholders of the company had monopolized the immensely profitable Indian trade and did not give a chance to others. So when the Industrial Revolution vastly increased the output of manufactured goods in Britain and new markets were needed, the East India Company was liquidated so that all British capitalists and indirectly the whole nation could exploit the Indian market. So the British Indian Government had to adopt the economic policy to link India with the British industrial system as a purely agricultural country which should produce raw materials for British factories and buy the goods which they produced. To enforce this policy the Government had neither the inclination nor the need to employ the crude methods of the East India Company. It could use the more refined and ingenious method of manipulating the tariff to achieve its double purpose of encouraging the import of British machine-made goods and discouraging the production of Indian hand-made articles some of which were of great artistic value.

It is true that in India itself factories were set up, banks opened, railway companies started, giving to the superficial observer an impression of economic progress. But in the first place all these things were on a very limited scale in proportion to India's vast area and large population and in the second place they were owned and managed almost exclusively by the British. Indians were associated with them only as customers or as labourers and clerks. As customers they derived some benefit individually but were collectively the poorer by sending their money out of the country and as labourers, they were for a long time at the mercy of their foreign employers without the protection of any Labour Laws and without the strength which comes from union. In short, owing partly to the deliberate policy of the Government and partly to its apathy, but mainly to the ignorance and listlessness of Indians themselves, the modern industrial system came to India under the peculiar circumstances that its direction was absolutely in the hands of foreign industrialists without the safeguards

which had been devised in Europe to check, at least to some extent, its harmful effects. The result was that almost all its advantages were enjoyed by the British and its disadvantages suffered by Indians. India retained on the whole her medieval agricultural economy. In fact the position became worse because indigenous manual industries were strangled to death in the iron grip of power industry. All the workers, except the comparatively small number who were absorbed in modern factories, were diverted to agriculture thus increasing the pressure on cultivable land which was already too heavy. But even more disastrous for the Indian cultivator was the circumstance that Indian agriculture was now hitched to world economy and had with its antiquated methods of cultivation to compete with that of highly advanced countries. In those countries the peasant was backed by co-operative banking, scientific methods of production and organized marketing. In India he was ridden by ignorance, the money-lender and malaria. So he was naturally defeated in every round. His cotton and his wheat were graded inferior and sold at very low prices. His indigo could not hold its own against chemical dyes and its cultivation had to be abandoned. The Government tried many schemes to help him. The agricultural department and the co-operative department were set up; a research institute was started; model agricultural farms and cattle-breeding farms were opened; exhibitions of agricultural products and implements and of cattle were held. But owing to the indifference of higher and the incapacity and dishonesty of lower officials the poor peasants could not derive much benefit from these. The missionary zeal and selfless service which were required to carry the new methods to remote villages and to persuade illiterate old-fashioned peasants to adopt them were beyond the capacity of the foreign Government or its servants to supply. As for the landlords, who in many provinces formed the link between the Government and the cultivators, they did not as a class stir a finger to help or encourage their tenants. So the

poor cultivator overwhelmed by new conditions and pressed between the upper and the nether mill-stone, the landlord and the money-lender, was reduced to appalling misery. The direct and indirect consequences of agricultural depression lowered the general economic level of the country and added to the political unrest.

Just as in the political and the economic field the Colonial English Culture caused maladjustment by making Indians aware of modern tendencies but affording them no opportunity of following them, so in cultural life also its role was negative and disturbing. No doubt it stirred up among an important section of the people the stagnant pool of life into movement but it could not give any positive direction to this movement. Under its influence educated Indians disowned their past but could not give any definite shape to their idea of the future being caught in a formless and purposeless present. They tried with some success to throw off the yoke of decrepit tradition but obedience to authority was so ingrained in their nature, that they fell into a worse form of mental slavery by making it their ideal to imitate the life of the Colonial Englishman of which they could catch an occasional enchanting glimpse from a respectful distance.

Now let us see how this baneful influence of the Colonial English Culture was exercised through school and university education, the only means by which the British Indian Government tried to spread that culture.

As far as primary education is concerned the Government had so little interest in it that its administration was transferred to the Municipal and District Boards the Education Department of the Government only prescribing the syllabus of studies and occasionally sending its officers for inspection. The basic change in the old system was that religious education was excluded from the syllabus, Geography, History and some other useful subjects were added to it and some arrangements, though very unsatisfactory, were made for the training of teachers. No doubt this change led to a slight improvement in the utility of

education but as the conditions laid down by the Government for the primary schools increased the cost of running them, which the Local Boards or private agencies could not easily meet, the number of schools decreased considerably and unfortunately even this limited effort was almost totally wasted on account of insufficient period of schooling, poor methods of teaching and bad administration.

Secondary schools suffered from two disadvantages. There was a uniform syllabus of a purely literary type for all pupils without any regard to the individual bent of mind and what was really disastrous, English was made the medium of instruction. In order that children could pick up enough English at the age of seven or eight to learn all subjects through its medium, it had to be given a predominant share in the syllabus, at the cost of all other subjects, lowering its general intellectual standard and educative value. Of course, University education also was imparted through English but in this case there was some choice of subjects of study. The worst of the many bad consequences of teaching through a foreign tongue was that the taught lost the habit of associating the written or spoken word with any clear idea of its meaning. Learning by rote without understanding had been the bane of Indian, in fact of all Eastern education, for centuries. "Modern Education" in India made things still worse by taxing the memory of the poor pupils with strings of words of which even the sounds were totally unfamiliar. Education in natural sciences, which was doled out in a much smaller measure than literary education showed this defect more conspicuously. Formula-repeating parrots were even more intolerable than rhyme-reciting parrots.

If in spite of all this, there were many capable even brilliant people among the product of English education the credit for that does not go to the system but to the exceptional merit of individual teachers, British as well as Indian, and to the extraordinary talent of individual pupils. Otherwise, the general type of those educated in modern Western educational institutions was much the

same as the product of old-fashioned Oriental seminaries. Both were replete with undigested information. The one mental faculty which was cultivated was passive memory. The powers of reflection, reasoning, inquiry, criticism and the practical application of knowledge to situations in life were starved out.

Only in two respects were the graduates of Western type of universities better than those of Oriental seminaries. They had more up-to-date information about the physical and social world and were better equipped for the work which was really expected of them. They could unquestioningly obey orders and faithfully follow instructions of their British superior officers and do all mechanical work which did not require judgment, will or initiative. There was a demand for them in the service market and they were sold by Indian standards for a handsome price. Those who were not absorbed in Government service went in for law and in a few cases for other independent professions. As the number of University graduates increased, competition in these professions, specially in law, became harder and harder and they fell victims to unemployment in increasing proportions.

They were the pioneers of the modern age and the Colonial English Culture, destined to illumine their minds with the new light from the West and to carry it to others and it must be said, in all fairness, that they made an earnest effort to imitate what they thought to be the English way of life. It was not their fault but that of their education, which had not equipped them even for intelligent imitation based on a correct understanding of the original, that they formed a preposterous idea of the fundamentals of the English character which they strove to copy. They saw that the English attached more importance to material values than to the external forms of religious values and followed their example by affecting the materialist and the freethinker, not knowing that the apparent materialism and religious indifference of Englishmen was a new form of the intensely religious and moral Puritanism. Similarly

they mistook the healthy individualism of the English for egoism, their rational utilitarianism for love of money. If their English prototypes had lost much of the elevating spiritual influence of Christianity, the loss was partly made up by the moral and aesthetic influences of their love of country and nation, their art, poetry and literature. But the poor blind imitators had lost all their moorings as they had cut themselves adrift not only from their traditional religion and morality, but also from their art and literature, their homeland and their people.

Of Western art even the Indians who had their education in England had very little understanding and those educated in India did not have it at all. Artistic taste can only be cultivated through contact with circles of artists and connoisseurs. In India there were no such circles. In England they were beyond the reach of Indian students.

As for English literature, they spent no doubt a considerable part of their life at the school and the university in reading a few of its selected pieces, but after finishing their studies, most of them never touched a book of any literary worth, their reading being confined mainly to the novels of the season or detective stories. Rarely did any individual of the type we are describing, get deep enough into the spirit of English literature specially English poetry to feel with the author thrills of joy or pangs of sorrow in the weal and woe of mankind. In short, the Indian mind generally touched merely the outer surface of English thought and sentiment and got nothing out of it except colourless, sapless, zestless egoism.

Obviously these bearers of the Colonial English Culture who could not even get enjoyment or benefit out of the intellectual and aesthetic wealth which the English language offered them, were incapable of making any contribution of their own to it. The only writing of any value in English was done by those Indians whose mind had originally been trained through the traditional Oriental education and who had subsequently learnt the English language. They wrote books on Indian Philosophy, Religion, Law, History and

Archaeology in English as well as in their own languages. They also tried to adjust their literature and art to new circumstances and cast them into new moulds.

Under this guidance vernacular literatures were diverted from the field of pure fantastic imagination to that of the observation and interpretation of actual life. The revival of Drama and the beginning of Novel in Indian languages restored to the Indian mind in a wider and richer form what it had possessed in the Classical, but lost in the Medieval age—the conception of life as a complex of subjective and objective reality and the art of portraying man in the setting of his physical and social environment in realistic proportion and natural colours. In Indian Architecture, Western influence led to economy of space, specially through the use of straight lines as well as to the considerations of modern hygiene. In Music the combination of harmony with melody and in Painting the emphasis on perspective and proportion showed a distinct Western influence. Besides, Western influence caused many modifications in articles of daily use like furniture, dress and food which were, on the whole, healthy and contributed to efficiency though not to grace or beauty of life.

Most of this was, as we said, the work of those whose education had an Oriental foundation. Those educated exclusively in English schools and colleges during this period had very little share in the transmission of knowledge, interpretation of life or creation of beauty. Their effusions, if any, were mainly confined to newspaper articles, contributed to English journals under Indian direction, only a few having the signal honour of being accepted by Anglo-Indian newspapers. Their verbosity, confused thinking, involved writing, faulty grammar and idiom made them the laughing-stock of Englishmen. Caricatures of their "Babu-English" and of themselves under fictitious names like Babu Jabbarjee B.A. or Babu Piche Lal M.A. were often published in Anglo-Indian journals.

In short, the intellectual as well as the spiritual foundation of the Colonial English Culture was hollow and weak.

Yet the social structure built upon it looked at first sight to be fairly imposing and not without an illusive resemblance to the stately edifice of the real English culture. Indian Sahibs put on what looked like English dress, spoke English to one another and "pigeonized" Hindustani to their servants or other "natives". The well-to-do among them lived in bungalows furnished in "English" style, ate "English" food served on tables, sitting on uncomfortable chairs and using awkward knives and forks. Casting yearning looks at the clubs of the real "Sahibs" they played billiards, tennis, cards, in their own consolation clubs. The more emancipated entertained themselves with European wines and if they could find an equally emancipated partner, with European dance. In manners, movements and gestures they assiduously tried to follow "English etiquette".

But the more observant could easily see that this colonial copy of the English culture was, in outline as well as in detail, very different from the original. The spoken English of the native Sahibs was by no means less, perhaps even more ridiculous than their written English. In writing, their mistakes were confined to grammar and style. But in speech the additional errors of pronunciation and accent heightened the comical effect. Specially when they strained their native organs of speech in the vain attempt to bring out the precise English tone, curious sounds were produced which sometimes baffled the comprehension of the listener. Their English dress was often made of showy material, ill-designed and ill-fitting and had very little in common with English clothes which are well-known for their fine cut and easy fit. Of balance, design and colour or of the suitability of the dress to the occasion they had not the faintest idea, their sole guide in these matters being the native "bearer" an Indian version of the English valet. Their bungalows were barrack-like large rooms surrounded with verandas. This style was evolved by British Indian Government's building department known as the Public Works Department, with the conscious object

of providing comfort and the unconscious one of avoiding architectural beauty and was known by the onomatopoeic name of P.W.D. style. But it succeeded more in its unconscious than its conscious object. The furniture in these bungalows, in keeping with their constructional design, was equally sombre and austere. The only tolerable elements of the Colonial English Culture was its food representing quite a happy blend of the English and Indian tastes but the strain caused by the effort to observe English table manners took away much of its relish.

Not only in table manners but in the whole gamut of social behaviour the native Sahibs mimicked the English Sahibs. But as manners are the outward expression of character in which they basically differed from Englishmen, their efforts at imitating them were, at best, like movements of puppets, if not like the silly antics of clowns. What was more deplorable, in some cases this superficial imitation of English manners, spoiled their morals. They learnt reticence and reserve from Englishmen but as these unpleasant qualities were not tempered with the English decorum and restraint they degenerated into naked arrogance and malevolence. Similarly the imitation of Englishmen's self-confidence and self-assertion without their sense of proportion made them aggressive and bumptious. Fortunately this mock English culture was almost wholly confined to men. Women were rarely affected by it. But the few who did adopt it suffered consequences even more disastrous. The Indian woman had during the period of social decadence been reduced to a repressed, neurotic creature by her ignorance, ill-health and the restrictions to which she was subjected by society. Now she was suddenly dragged out of her safe, though stuffy retreat into the troubles and temptations of life without the reserves, which could help her to keep her balance. The new culture not only ended her seclusion which was a comparatively recent institution, but also reduced the traditional distance between man and woman which had been kept in India from time immemorial; not only brought her into "society"

but took her to the club to dance with "strange" men. This "emancipation" led to the deplorable reaction that Indians generally were alarmed by the example of Westernized women into opposing genuine reform movements for the freedom and even the education of women.

On this new educated class the British rulers of India had placed their hopes for pioneer work in spreading the new light. They had justified their educational policy of concentrating on the education of a smaller number of upper and middle class people with the argument that education would gradually "filter down" from above. But these hopes were not fulfilled. Those above had hardly anything to give to those below and even if they had, the will to give which is born of love and fellow-feeling was wanting. They were completely cut off not only from the illiterate masses, but also from old-fashioned people with purely Oriental education. They lived like strangers among their own people and were proud of it. In the no-man's land between the East and West they were untroubled by patriotic feelings or national ties. The only thing which distressed them was that the door of admittance into English society was shut on them. In short, far from being eager to do their duty by their countrymen they were not even conscious of it. They devoted themselves solely to the service of the foreign rulers. The work of national service, education and reform they left to others.

Though the Colonial English Culture had, thanks to the support of the ruling power, replaced the Hindustani Culture as the common culture of the country, its sphere of influence was very limited. Its votaries were mainly those who owed their rise to the top level of society to the patronage of the British Government. Among those who had no direct concern with the ruling classes, some were influenced by the new culture only to the extent of acquiring a broader outlook on life through contact with modern thought and some were so prejudiced against it as to shun it as if it were a pest. The latter group consisted

mainly of orthodox religious leaders and their devoted followers.

The religious leaders, specially of the Muslim community were for some time even against the new type of education and put a ban upon it, but later they allowed learning of the English language and Western sciences, at the same time warning their people against the social and cultural influence of the West as a great danger to their religion. As a matter of fact, religious leaders both Hindu and Muslim had not approved even of the Hindustani Culture evolved during Akbar's time, as it was not based on religion. After the domination of India by the British, religious groups had apparently subsided into a passive existence but under the surface they were very active, taking advantage of the popular discontent against the political and cultural domination of foreigners, to increase their influence over the people. As they were equally dissatisfied with the English Culture and the secular Hindustani culture they tried to skip over a thousand years of History and lead the people to their respective religion-centred ancient culture. How this movement caused a cultural and political split between Hindus and Muslims we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

REACTION AGAINST ENGLISH CULTURE: POLITICAL AND CULTURAL SEPARATISM

I

We saw that after 1857 the Colonial English Culture had established its sway more or less over the minds of the upper and middle classes in India. It was only the orthodox religious section, and the mass of common people led by them who offered stubborn resistance to Western cultural influences. But at the end of the First World War, new political circumstances caused something like a revolution in the attitude of the educated classes. Disappointed in their hopes of getting the self-government promised them by the British Government they were now actually conscious of their physical as well as intellectual subjection and desirous of winning political and cultural freedom. So they turned to the religious groups and the masses from whom they had alienated themselves and made common cause with them against the foreign rulers.

This sudden change in the attitude of educated Indians was only partly due to the disillusionment and resentment caused by the Reform Act of 1919. A more powerful factor was the economic depression which followed the wartime boom and for the first time unmasked before Indian eyes the ugly face of imperialistic capitalism. Though this depression affected almost all classes of people, the worst sufferers were the lower, middle and labouring classes who were the victims of unemployment and the cultivators who had to sell their produce at the lowest prices. During the War many industrial factories had sprung up, most of them with British capital. As the trade union movement and labour legislation were yet in their infancy there were no safeguards against the ruthless exploitation of labour which was going on and when the end of war threw millions

of people out of work there was no provision for relief. Similarly there was a whole army of educated unemployed. As for the cultivators, their misery was boundless because there were three forces working for their ruin—foreign competition, the landlord and the money-lender and occasionally Nature dealt a blow by withholding the vital rain or sending a fatal flood.

Though the Indian masses had for centuries been in the habit of submitting loyally to the Government of the day, they were, on the other hand, always disposed to hold the Government responsible for all ills on earth. So they put the entire blame for the depression, which had ruined the peasants and labourers, on the foreign Government and it was not very difficult for the National Congress which had already attracted all anti-British elements among the educated classes to its platform, to turn the economic distress among the masses into political unrest. In this they were helped by the leaders of Hindu and Muslim religions and cultural movements which we will briefly discuss later on in another connection.

To combine these more or less heterogeneous elements into one united front against the British Government, the Congress required a leader who could understand the needs of the masses as well as those of the classes, who could appreciate the value of economic as well as religious and moral forces and who could sympathise with the legitimate aspirations of the Muslims as deeply as with those of the Hindus. Fortunately just at that time Mahatma Gandhi who fulfilled all these conditions to perfection appeared on the political horizon of India. It was his personal magnetism which drew all classes and communities to the Congress and his moral and spiritual influence which inspired them with one common purpose—freedom from foreign yoke.

The first action in the political campaign which the National Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi opened against the British rule was the agitation for the repeal of the Rowlatt Acts of 1919. These acts provided not only for retention but for an intensification of the repressive wartime

policy of the British Indian Government for a long time after the end of the war, and were clearly aimed at curbing the movement for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi took up the challenge by setting up the "Satyagraha Sabha" with a programme of nation-wide civil resistance. The Government struck at this movement by firing at a peaceful protest meeting at the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar and later by proclaiming martial law throughout the province of the Punjab. The blood of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh victims of the Amritsar firing joined the three communities in a sacred bond of comradeship under the flag of the Indian National Congress.

The Indian Muslims who bitterly resented the policy of the British Government in the Middle East which had dismembered the Turkish Empire and was using the new states so formed as well as other Muslim states as pawns on the political chessboard, had formed a semi-religious organization under the name of the Khilafat Committee which provided a meeting-ground for the orthodox religious group and the new educated class of Muslims. The Khilafat Committee now decided to ally itself with the National Congress in India's struggle for freedom and led the way by adopting Mahatma Gandhi's programme of "Non-violent Non-co-operation" based on the theory that a foreign Government could subsist only with the co-operation of the governed and would collapse when that co-operation was withdrawn.

This dignified fight against the mighty British Empire which consisted in organized resistance against laws which the Indians conscientiously believed to be unjust, fought on the whole, without violence in word or deed, freed the Indian mind from pessimism and defeatism and created the conviction that even an unarmed subject people could preserve their self-confidence and self-respect and aspire after freedom. Its first phase lasted with ups and downs for seven years. Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders were kept in jail for several years but the movement went on till the Government changed its tactics and adopted a conciliatory policy.

In 1927 the British Government announced that a commission headed by Sir John Simon would visit India to find out if the country was ready for the next instalment of political reforms. The Congress replied to these dilatory tactics by resolving at its Madras Session (Dec. 1927) that its object was "complete Independence within the British Empire if possible, without if necessary." It appointed a committee with Pandit Motilal Nehru (father of Jawaharlal Nehru) as its chairman to draw up a constitution of free India and get it approved by a conference of all the Indian political parties.

In 1928 when the Simon Commission came to India it was boycotted by all regular political parties and could only record the evidence of private persons or groups representing particular sectional interests. On the other hand, the Nehru Committee Report envisaging India as a free Dominion of the British Commonwealth was adopted by all parties, except a large section of Muslims headed by the Ali Brothers who opposed its provisions dealing with communal representation. This was the end of the communal harmony achieved ten years ago and though many Muslims went on supporting the Congress, a large section of the community was overcome by separatist tendencies. The Congress, however, adopted the Nehru Report at its Calcutta Session (Dec. 1928) with the proviso that if Dominion Status was not conceded to India within one year, the Nehru Report would lapse and the Congress would revert to its policy of Complete Independence. As the Congress demand was ignored by the British Government it made at the midnight of December 31, 1929, the irrevocable decision to strive for complete independence. On January 26, 1930, the historic pledge of independence was taken by millions of people in public meetings held all over India.

In March 1930 began the second phase of India's struggle for independence with the breaking of the law which forbade people to manufacture even a small quantity of salt without a licence from the Government. The reason why this particular law was made the target of civil resistance was that

the heavy tax on salt had raised its price causing hardship to the poorest people. Mahatma Gandhi's famous march on foot to Dandi situated on the Kathiawar coast, with the declared object of making salt from sea-water, galvanized the whole country into disobeying laws which were manifestly unjust and boycotting foreign cloth which came mainly from British factories. This time the movement was perfectly organized and disciplined. About one hundred thousand persons of all castes and creeds courted imprisonment, many of them suffering physical violence at the hands of the police without attempting retaliation even where it was possible. Many died in police firings.

Early in 1931 some moderate leaders arranged a truce between the Congress and the Government through what is known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Mahatma Gandhi attended a Round Table Conference in London to negotiate for an honourable peace with the British Government. But no agreement could be reached and the Civil Disobedience campaign was resumed after the Mahatma's return to India. This time the Government was more ruthless than ever before. Not only were all the Congress leaders including Mahatma Gandhi sent to prison but the total funds of the Congress Committees throughout India and the private assets and private properties of Congress leaders were confiscated. The fear of losing their all and abandoning their families to starvation, proved stronger for many soldiers of freedom than imprisonment or death and in course of time the movement died down.

Taking advantage of the temporary collapse of the Congress movement, the British Government covened another Round Table Coference of a few safe persons and prepared a scheme of political reform which was passed by the British Parliament in 1935 under the name of Government of India Act providing for the transfer in the provinces of all departments and in the Central Government of Industry, Commerce, Railway, etc. to elected Indian Ministers but retaining the veto powers of the Viceroy and Provincial Governors. The Central Government was envisaged as a

federation of British India and the autocratic Indian states, the latter sending 33 per cent members to the lower chamber and 40 per cent to the upper chamber of the central legislature—all nominated by the rulers.

Before the general election held under the new Act in 1937 the Congress had formally suspended the Civil Resistance movement and the Government had released Congress leaders who fought the election with great success. In five provinces the Congress Party won absolute majority and in the rest it was either the largest or second largest single party. After hesitating for a few months it decided to work the reforms in the provinces while opposing the reactionary schemes of Central Government. In five provinces it formed its own Ministries and in two provinces joined coalition Ministries as the majority party.

Taking the responsibility of government with limited powers was a fateful event in the history of the National Congress which had a mixed result. On the one side, it gave the Congress leaders an opportunity of proving their administrative capacity of which they made very good use, and extended the influence of the party increasing its membership tenfold. On the other side, it diverted the Congress to some extent from its ideals of complete independence and communal harmony thus alienating the minorities specially the Muslims. The reason, obviously, was that the flood of new members, many of whom did not wholly agree with the fundamental principles of the Congress but were attracted by the glamour of power, submerged the older element and appreciably changed the general colour of the party giving it a conservative and communal tinge. A considerable number of its former members seceded—some joining the leftist parties and most of the Muslims going over to the Muslim League.

The League which had for many years existed as a shadow party the only substantial element in it being its life-president Mr Mohammad Ali Jinnah, now took the best advantage of the reaction against the Congress caused among the Muslims partly by its new communal tendency

but mainly by its project of abolishing the baneful system of Zamindari (landlordism of the Irish type) on which the Muslim middle class in some provinces mainly depended for their livelihood. Developing soon into a full-fledged well-organized political party and backed by the British Government as well as by reactionary elements in the country, the Muslim League fostered the separatist tendency among a large section of Muslims till it grew into the demand for Pakistan—the formation of the Muslim majority provinces into a separate sovereign state of that name. We will show later that this was the political consequence of the cultural separatism which had been at work for a long time and was only temporarily overshadowed by the enthusiasm for the movement of national freedom.

In 1939 the Congress Party and its Provincial Governments were faced with the problem of taking an attitude to the Second World War. All Congressmen were absolutely unanimous in condemning fascism and sympathizing with the democratic cause. But opinion differed over the question of co-operating with the war-effort of the British Government and the conditions for such co-operation. Mahatma Gandhi's view was that the Congress should suspend their political demands, should give its whole-hearted moral support to Britain and her allies, but should take no practical share in the war-effort as it was against the spirit of *Ahimsa*. Some thought the Congress should take advantage of this opportunity to press its demands and if they were conceded, should give not merely moral but also full practical support to the allied cause because the Congress had accepted *Ahimsa* or non-violence only as a policy for internal political struggle, not as a creed which was to be adhered to even in the face of aggression from outside. Most of the members oscillated between these two points of view.

To put an end to this difficult situation the Congress Ministries resigned in all provinces but the party abstained from taking any step which would embarrass the Government or interfere with the war-effort. Later, against the advice of Mahatma Gandhi it offered to co-operate with

the British Government provided a provisional National Government was set up in India immediately and she was promised complete independence after the war. This offer was ignored by the Government and so was the symbolical individual civil resistance renewed by Mahatma Gandhi to protest against the suppression of civil liberties during the war.

Early in 1942 when Japan had occupied Burma and Malaya and was threatening to invade India, the British Government on the insistent advice of President Roosevelt, sent Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate with the political parties in India on the basis of transferring all departments in the Central Government, except Defence, to Indian Ministers taken from the main political parties and promising Dominion Status after the war. This offer seemed to have made an impression on the Congress and the Muslim League but it was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi and ultimately rejected by all.

Mahatma Gandhi, who knew that the British Government did not think it could defend India against a Japanese invasion, argued that if the British withdrew from India, the Japanese would desist from invading it and even if they did, Indians fired with the spirit of independence, could resist them by refusing to co-operate with them in any way and getting killed in the process without retaliating.

He persuaded the Congress to pass (August 1942) a resolution on asking the British Government to " Quit India" and if it refused to do so, to start a nation-wide campaign of Civil Disobedience. Before the Mahatma could see the Viceroy and argue with him, he and all the prominent Congress leaders were arrested and sent to prison. This set the country, deprived of the direction of responsible leaders, inflamed by sincere and patriotic but young and imprudent left-wing aspirants to leadership, afire from one end to the other. The deplorable mob riots were crushed with even more deplorable ruthlessness by the Government and the peace of the graveyard reigned over India.

After the end of the Second World War the British Parliament under the guidance of the Labour Government adopted the large-hearted and statesmanlike policy of making a genuine attempt to find a just and reasonable solution of the Indian problem, which had been the cause of conflict between two great peoples whom fate had brought together more than three hundred years ago. A British Cabinet mission consisting of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr Alexander was sent to India to evolve in consultation with the main political parties, an agreed plan for transfer of power. It appeared very soon that the only real obstacle in the way of an agreed solution was the demand of the Muslim League for a separate state which had to be reconciled with that of the Congress for a united free India. The compromise proposal which the Cabinet Mission put before Indian leaders was that autonomous groups of Muslim and Hindu majority provinces should be joined in a loose federation which should be immediately given the status of a British Dominion with the inherent right of cessation. The proposal was well-received at first and a compromise seemed possible. But the separatist tendencies which had been fostered by the British Government and the vested interests within the country during the last ten years had, through their unceasing campaign of hate, started a continuous series of bloody communal riots in the country and created mutual bitterness and mistrust, which made rational thinking impossible. The negotiations for peace carried on in the midst of violent clashes in several parts of India naturally failed. As things were heading for a climax which would give the British Government a reasonable excuse to stay on in India for keeping peace, the bitter draught of partition had to be swallowed and it was decided that India be divided into two parts—one under the name of Pakistan, consisting of the Western Punjab, the North-West-Frontier-Province, Baluchistan, Sindh and Eastern Bengal, and the other comprising the rest of the country and they be declared free British Dominions on the 14 and

15 August 1947, respectively. So the great dream of freedom which India had been dreaming for a long time was at last realized. She escaped from her bondage with life but not with limb as she had to lose two of her organic parts. A constitution was completed and passed by the Constituent Assembly at the end of 1949 and came into force on 26 January 1950. Since that date it became a Sovereign Democratic Republic but maintained an informal connection with the British Commonwealth.

II

In this brief survey of the last phase of India's struggle for freedom we saw that relations between the majority community and the biggest minority passed through three phases. The first between 1918 and 1928 was one of almost perfect political unity, the second between 1928 and 1937 of growing tension and the third, dating from the assumption of power by the Congress in seven provinces, of open hostility between the Muslim League representing the majority of upper and middle class Muslims and the National Congress which they dubbed, without justification, a Hindu organization.

That the parting of ways between the Muslim League and the Congress which led to the partition of India, was mainly due to the blow which the land policy of the Congress aimed at the vested interest of almost the whole upper and middle classes of Muslims in several important provinces of India, we have already admitted. But the fact that the League could carry with it a large section of the poorer classes of Muslims whose economic interests were likely to suffer through its separatist policy, cannot be explained on the basis of the economic theory. Religious prejudice was no doubt present but a comparison with Muslim countries of the Middle East shows that mere religious prejudice is not sufficient to prevent Muslims from living and working in harmony with non-Muslims.

The disharmony between Hindus and Muslims which

resulted in the disastrous division of India, was rooted in the cultural separatist tendencies of the reform movements within Hindu and Muslim communities. These movements had started in the declining period of the Moghul Empire, with the object of lifting the people out of the moral depression which was partly the cause and partly the effect of political chaos. Later they were quickened by the reaction against the type of Western Culture which had come to India through commercial adventurers. The growing influence of the Colonial English Culture in the second quarter of the nineteenth century alarmed leading Hindus and Muslims lest all Indians allow their minds to be enslaved like the unfortunate group mentioned in the last chapter. Some of them, specially Muslim divines, rightly thought that in order to re-inforce their moral and spiritual power of resistance against the domination of the English Culture, they should look back at the sources of their religious and cultural consciousness and draw new inspiration and strength from them. In this they succeeded. But this throwing back of the mind into the distant past, had the undesirable result that the near past and its fairly valuable heritage, the Hindustani Culture lost its significance in their eyes. In course of time, the common culture which had been evolved by the blending of the Hindu and Muslim elements in the rising phase of the Moghul Empire was disowned by all but a small section of Hindus and Muslims and was liable to be dissolved into its constituent elements. We will make a brief survey of these movements of reform and revival which will help us in understanding the present cultural situation in India.

We have seen that when the Muslims came to India their general, cultural and religious life had considerably deviated from the lines laid down by Islam. This gap gradually increased mainly through the degeneration of the Muslim divines most of whom had turned themselves into courtiers intriguing and manoeuvring for riches and power and utterly neglected their duty of religious teachers and spiritual guides.

The first attempt to re-awaken the religious and moral consciousness of Muslim society was made by two Muslim divines independent of court influence in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Maulana Sheikh Ahmad of Sarhind (1564-1624) tried to divert Muslim mysticism from the monistic way which often leads to indolence and inactivity as well as to heterodox beliefs, towards more orthodox lines and generally exhorted the common people and the nobles of the royal court to live a pure and austere life in keeping with the Islamic Shariah. He showed his independence by defying the court statute which required him to prostrate himself before the Emperor Jehangir, though he had to suffer imprisonment for it. Maulana Shah Abdul Haq of Delhi (1551-1642) brought Indian Muslims nearer to the source of Islamic teaching by popularizing the study of the traditions of the Prophet in India.

But the greatest contribution to the movement of religious reform among Suni Muslims was made by Shah Waliullah and his family. Shah Waliullah himself translated the Quran into chaste Persian and wrote several books on Quranic studies thus leading the Muslims back to the fountain-head of Islam. His literary work was continued by his illustrious sons, specially Shah Abdul Aziz while the practical realization of the reforms proposed by him was attempted by Maulana Syed Ahmad of Bareilly, the distinguished disciple, Maulana Abdul Hai, the son-in-law and Maulvi Mohammad Ismail, the nephew of Shah Abdul Aziz. These three militant reformers with the help of an armed force of volunteers wrested the Western Punjab and the North-West-Frontier region from the Sikh Government with the intention of turning it into a model Islamic state (1815). But differences with the Pathans weakened the hold of the reformers on the conquered territory and after a few years they were defeated by the Sikhs at Balakot. Maulana Syed Ahmad and Maulvi Mohammad fell on the battlefield and the "Islamic State" came to an end.

But the purely social and religious reform movement started by Shah Waliullah and his sons had more success

among a section of Muslims who gave up superstitious beliefs and luxurious habits and began to live a pure and austere life like Muslims in the early days of Islam.

This puritanical movement was further intensified through the menace to orthodox religion which the growing influence of Western Culture after 1857 brought with it. Bitter hostility to English Culture and the British Government was fostered in the minds of the younger generation of religious-minded Muslims educated at the Seminary of Deobund founded in 1868. Maulana Muhammad Qasim of Nanota and some other divines of Shah Waliullah's school of thought established the reputation of Deobund as a centre of learning and liberty. The sentiment of political freedom which had lived in the minds of the teachers and pupils of Deobund from its very inception was inflamed into a passion by the dynamic personality of Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan who was externed by the British Government and kept as a political prisoner in Malta for many years. Another distinguished pioneer of the freedom movement among Muslim divines was Maulana Shibli. But the vague though intense political feelings of the Muslim religious class were given a definite shape and direction under the leadership of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who brought about an alliance between them and the National Congress which endured through the stormy days of the communal frenzy let loose by the Muslim League and survived its formidable onslaughts.

A few years after the birth of Deobund, another great Muslim reformer Syed Ahmad Khan founded the Aligarh college for modern Western education. Both the institutions aimed at reforming the Muslim community but their conception of reform differed. While Deobund had a vague undefined idealistic aim of returning to the early days of Islam, Aligarh had a definite, realistic and limited object of adjustment to present material circumstances.

This Aligarh group does not refer to Syed Ahmad Khan and the small band of sincere and selfless reformers associated with him but the large section of upper class

and higher middle class Muslims for whom and with whom the reformers had to work. Syed Ahmad Khan himself was a high-minded and enlightened reformer and statesman and his aim was wider and higher. He wanted to lead the Indian mind out of the obscurantism of the medieval into the "New Light" of the modern age through Western education and to evolve a new culture by blending the best elements of the Western and the Hindustani Cultures. In politics, his policy was that of conditional co-operation with the British Government consistent with the national self-respect of Indians.

His English School at Ghazipur (1864), Persian School at Moradabad (1869), and the Scientific Society (1863) were all founded as common institutions for Hindus and Muslims with the full co-operation of both communities. But during his sojourn at Benares as a Judicial Officer, he realized that the Hindus as a community were filled with a revivalist passion and were giving up the common Hindustani Culture for a purely Hindu Culture. Symbolical of this tendency was the movement started in Benares in 1867 for turning out Urdu from Government offices and courts and adopting literary Hindi in Devnagari script. After expostulating in vain with his Hindu friends about this separatist tendency he was convinced that no co-operation in the cultural field was possible between Hindus and Muslims and decided to limit his reformist activities to the Muslim community and to look to the British Government for help and protection.

During the wars in the Balkan Peninsula and Tripoli in which Turkey, the seat of the Muslim Khilafat, was involved a wave of anti-British feeling and a bias towards the movement of national freedom found its way into the minds of the students of Aligarh College and became steadily stronger n spite of all the measures taken by the authorities of the College to check it.

This was part of the general political awakening which he personal example of Hasarat Mohani, the poetic inspiraion of Iqbal and the publicistic stimulus of Maulana

Muhammad Ali had produced in the modern educated class of Muslims corresponding to that produced among the religious-minded by Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan, Maulana Shibli and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The British Government which was alarmed at this development tried to counter it by encouraging the "loyal group" of Muslims to set up a political organization under the name of the Muslim League. The struggle between the Loyalist wing and the Nationalist wing of educated Muslims ended in the victory of the latter when the Muslim League under the presidentship of Mr Jinnah, who was an ardent nationalist in those days, came to an understanding with the National Congress in 1916. Later, when the Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi had adopted a programme too radical for Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League, Maulana Mohammad Ali rallied nationalist Muslims around his new political organization, the Khilafat Committee (set up to agitate for the restoration of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina to the Turkish Khalifa) and found the educational institution, Jamia Millia which had been formed by the nationalist students and teachers expelled from the Aligarh College. But his greatest achievement was to bring together the orthodox religious group of Deobund and the English educated group of Aligarh under the banner of the Khilafat Committee and, later, on the platform of the National Congress where they stood shoulder to shoulder with soldiers of freedom drawn from all communities and classes of Indians.

The union of the orthodox and the modern educated Muslims proved to be fruitful and infused a new spirit in both. The former came in touch with the needs and problems of the times and learnt something of the technique of organization and the latter developed a certain degree of religious consciousness and established contact with the Muslim masses from whom they had been completely cut off. As a homogenous well-knit community the Muslims developed a capacity for concerted thought and action and took a leading part in the national fight for freedom between 1920-22. There was a possibility now that they would

turn their attention to the greatest problems which Muslims throughout the world have to face today—the problem of *adjusting* their religious and cultural life to the needs and conditions of the modern age. But unfortunately the union between the two sections of Muslims did not survive.

The sudden collapse of the Khilafat movement on which they had built up their influence over the Muslim community through the decision of the Turks to abolish the very institution of the Khilafat, cut the ground from under their feet and had a devastating effect on their morale. The old antipathy between the two sections of Muslims was revived and they became jealous of each other's power. Then there were splits within each section. The orthodox waged an internecine war over the issue of supporting or opposing King Ibni Saud's policy of pulling down mausoleums built over the tombs of Holy persons in Hejaz. The modern educated fought among themselves over the relations between the Muslims and the Congress. Those of them who were not really interested in the freedom movement but had agreed to back the Congress in return for its support to the Khilafat now found the atmosphere of the Congress uncongenial for them and were wooed and won over by the Loyalist group. These seceders who had received their political training and won their influence over the public in the Khilafat and the Congress movements, served as a facade for the Loyalist group which joined the Muslim Conference and later the Muslim League, at the instance of their British masters to use these organizations for inciting the Muslims against the Congress and to break up the united front of Hindus and Muslims against the British Government.

It is difficult to say if the Muslim and also the Hindu anti-Congress groups had a hand in the communal riots which broke out simultaneously throughout India or they were solely engineered by the police and the secret agents of the British Government, but there is no doubt that some political leaders unscrupulously exploited them to strengthen their communalist organizations. But they were more

successful in dividing Hindus and Muslims than in luring them into communalist parties. Specially Muslim communalists appealing to their people in the name of religion could not make much impression because the great majority of the orthodox religious class and even the religious-minded modern educated Muslims were against them as staunch nationalists and the Muslims generally attached more importance to the opinion of the latter in matters of religion. Besides, though the illiterate simple-minded masses of Muslims as well as Hindus could be inflamed into bloody riots by any fire-brand fanatic or wily *agent provocateur* they could not be made to harbour hatred or ill-will against each other for any length of time. So during the General Elections of 1937 the great majority of Muslim voters did not vote for the Muslim League but for the Congress in several provinces and for independent candidates and others.

But after these elections when the Congress formed Ministries in the Provinces, the Nationalist Muslim politicians grumbled that they were given too few offices. More important, however, was the grievance voiced by the generality of Muslims that their cultural rights were being trampled upon by Congress Governments. The substantial core in this largely imaginary grievance was that the majority of the new Congressmen who had been attracted to the party by the glamour of power and more or less dominated it now, did not believe in the generous policy which Mahatma Gandhi had adopted towards the minorities, specially the Muslims. So the general pro-Muslim attitude of the Congress did undergo a substantial though subtle change. The most palpable sign of this was that the solemn declaration of the Congress that Hindustani (the greatest common measure of Urdu and Hindi) in both the Persian and the Devnagari scripts shall be made the National language was not honoured by the Congress Governments in some provinces and Urdu was generally discouraged by them. This caused a universal dissatisfaction not only in the upper and middle classes but in the lower middle class of Muslims which forms the majority of that community

in many urban areas. The anti-Congress section of the Muslims which had now joined the Muslim League after having dragged it and its president Mr Jinnah out of their splendid isolation into the midst of "the madding crowd", found the cultural issue far more effective to incite the Muslims against the Congress than the purely religious issue had proved to be. The unscrupulous way in which they exploited it and the gullibility which Muslims, specially in the provinces in which they were in a minority, showed in listening to their propaganda, has scarcely a parallel in the political history of nations. The Muslims were persuaded that not only the Hindi movement but also the Hindustani movement (which the Mahatma had started for the special purpose of bringing about the best possible cultural understanding between Hindus and Muslims) was designed to undermine the Muslim Culture. Even the scheme of Basic Education which Mahatma Gandhi had evolved in consultation with the most distinguished Muslim educationists and which was mainly a technical problem concerning the method of education, was made out to be a menace to the cultural life of the Muslims. The safeguard suggested against these dangers (for Muslims in the minority provinces!) was separating the provinces in which Muslims were in a majority from India, and forming them into a independent state under the name of Pakistan. What is utterly perplexing to every normal mind is the question how the Muslims in the minority provinces, who were to remain in India in case the country was divided, could be made to believe that Pakistan would solve their difficulties. Only one hypothesis can offer a possible solution of this puzzle. We have already seen that the unrest among Muslims was more pronounced in the provinces in which the Congress Ministries proposed to abolish the Zamindari System because a very large percentage of the Muslims of the upper middle and even lower middle classes depended directly or indirectly on Zamindari. The Muslim Zamindars (as also their Hindu brethren) and a large number of other Muslims wanted to overthrow the Congress Governments

before they could carry out the dreaded land reform and so they supported the Muslim League. So far facts Now the hypothesis. Probably these Muslims neithe wanted Pakistan nor believed that it would come, bu supported it simply to create a deadlock in Indian politic so that the British might find a pretext to stay on in Indi and protect their vested interests.

However that be, the Muslim League was remarkabl successful in exploiting the cultural issue in inciting India Muslims against the Congress and its case for Pakista was greatly strengthened. Prominent Congress leader went on saying that the cultural issue was a mere sentimenta affair confined to the middle class and did not interest th Muslim masses. They did not realize that illiterate masse in India generally and the Muslim masses particularl blindly followed their middle class leaders. How the agitation for Pakistan led to violent disturbances and how Pakistan was finally conceded by the Congress has beer already dealt with.

After partition when almost all the Muslim League leaders had left Muslims to their fate and migrated to Pakistan, Muslim leadership in India passed into the hand of the Nationalist Muslims who had always advocated a united Indian nation. The "two-nation theory" which nobody had ever heard of in India before 1937 died a natural death on the Indian soil and Muslims became an integral part of the Indian nation. The incontrovertible proof of the fact that Indian Muslims had, like other minorities and the Hindu majority, willingly accepted Indiar nationhood, was that their representatives in the Constituent Assembly (who had been elected on the basis of separate communal electorates) unanimously supported the new Indian Constitution and so did the Muslim newspapers and public organizations. Moreover in the first General Elections held in independent India (1950) a great majority of the Muslims voted for the Congress and the rest for other parties loyal to the Indian Constitution.

Now the question is, after the Indian Muslims have

been integrated into the common Indian nationhood what is their attitude to a common National Culture? Before answering this question it would be better to survey briefly the present cultural situation of the Muslim community in India.

The position at present is this. The fundamental problem which the Muslims in India like their co-religionists all over the world have to face is that of adjusting themselves to modern Western Culture. So far they have taken a definite attitude to two of its principles. By offering their allegiance to the Indian Constitution they have dissociated themselves from the idea of the theocratic state, which is still a cause of internal conflict in many Muslim contries and have accepted the modern Western concept of the secular democratic state. But on the other hand, like other Indian communities and most Asian peoples, while honouring patriotism ahd loyalty to the state as sacred values, they are unanimous in rejecting what the Western nations explicitly believe in—the priority of country or state over religion. For them religion is, as it always was, the highest value.

This brings us to the question: how do the Indian Muslims stand in relation to the National Indian Culture? Here we will answer it very briefly because the next two chapters are dealing more fully with this as well as other issues connected with the present situation of the National Culture in India.

The Indian Muslims in spite of differing from the majority community in institutional religion, have much in common with it in fundamental, religious and moral consciousness, social structure, family life and the general way of living and can easily fit into any rational pattern of National Culture, but they are discouraged and distressed by the feeling that the pattern which is being evolved as symbolized in the National Language, is inspired by an exclusive policy which tends to reject the contribution which they have made to the Indian Culture during the last seven and a half centuries.

* * *

Just as in the case of Muslims, the reactions of the Hindu community to Western Culture, both positive and negative, were very strong. The first positive reaction was represented by the Adi Brahmo Samaj which, though slightly influenced by Islam and Christianity as well as by Western Culture, was essentially a Hindu reform movement of a moderate nature. But the new society consisting of dissenters from the mother Samaj founded by Keshub Chandra Sen under the name of Brahmo Samaj of India was under a stronger influence of Christianity and had the appearance of a separate sect formed after the pattern of Semitic religions. Its programme of social reforms also was much more radical. Though this latter movement was not very popular in Hindu society and was weakened by internal quarrels which divided it into two sub-sects, it rendered valuable service by awakening the spirit of social reform among the Hindus.

Keshub Chandra Sen's influence aroused the spirit of religious and social reform in the educated Hindus of Bombay who started the Prarthana Samaj more or less on the lines of the Brahmo Samaj. The leadership of Ranade did not allow the new Samaj to develop into a separate sect but made it into a powerful movement of social reform among the general Hindu society.

Mahadeo Govind Ranade was one of the greatest leaders of modern India. He tried with much more success to infuse a new spirit of enlightenment in Hindus than Syed Ahmad Khan had tried to do in Muslims. Ranade's contribution to the social, educational and political awakening of Hindus not only in the Deccan but throughout India was very great. In addition to bringing about specific social reforms, he created a general reformative tendency among the Hindus through the Prarthana Samaj and the Social Conference, stimulated the modern educational movement in Maharashtra through the Deccan Educational Society, and the movement of political freedom through the Sarvajanic Sabha and the Deccan Sabha. He was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress.

Ranade was like Ram Mohan Roy and other Brahmo Samaj leaders, the representative of the liberal tendency in Hindus which responded favourably to Western Culture and believed in adapting Hinduism to the needs of the modern age by reforming and modifying the traditional beliefs and social practices. But the reaction of a very large section of the Hindu society to Western Culture was on the whole negative. The only aspect of it which appealed to them was the patriotism and nationalism of Western peoples. They were convinced that traditional Hindu religion and culture were self-sufficient and could meet the needs of every age. What was required was not a reform or modification but simply a re-interpretation. The salvation of India according to them did not lie in following the West but in freeing herself from its political and intellectual domination and forming herself into an independent nation with a national culture free from all foreign influence. Nation to them meant the Hindu community. Muslims they regarded as foreigners more or less like the British.

The most prominent protagonist of this conservative Hinduism was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who was a powerful adversary of Ranade and the leader of the party which opposed his political and social liberalism in the Deccan. Tilak began his public career (1880) at the young age of 24 as the editor of the *Maratha* and the *Kesari*. Working in co-operation with a band of enthusiastic young men he won rapid success and took a prominent part in founding the Deccan Education Society and the Fergusson College (1882).

Tilak's literary activities were directed towards bringing Hindus in living contact with their glorious past. He was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar and two of his books *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* and *Orion* written in English and his Marāthi commentary on Bhagwad Gita *Gita-Rahasya* had a deep influence on the minds of a large section of educated Hindus and gave Hindu nationalism a decidedly religious and slightly revivalist bias.

The Arya Samaj movement pursued a more pronounced revivalist policy by trying to carry Hinduism back to the pristine simplicity of the Vedic Age by discarding its Vedantic and Puranic elements and all influences of the Muslim and Western Cultures.

The mystical cult of Theosophy represented by Mrs Annie Besant did not find much response in the Hindu community, but Mrs Besant's personal services to Hinduism as the founder of the Central Hindu College (now the Benares Hindu University) and the Indian freedom movement as the sponsor of the Home Rule League were of considerable value.

These reform movements were truly the product of the resurgence of speculative activity and dynamic impulse in the Hindu mind which had an indirect bearing on their religious sentiment. Religious awakening in the true sense of the word, which has for its source a purely religious experience, a direct and immediate perception of the Ultimate Reality was brought about by Shri Ram Krishna Paramhansa and his successor Swami Vivekananda. Shri Ram Krishna had since his very childhood a compelling urge to seek the truth through the time-honoured way of ascetic self-discipline and self-purification. His all-embracing faith led him not only to try the different disciplines of Hindu mystical orders with experiences of being blessed with the visions of Kali, Sita and Krishna but also to go through the devotional practices of Islam and Christianity which afforded him the supreme pleasure of finding himself in the living presence of the prophet Mohammed and Jesus Christ respectively. The last seven years of his life he devoted to initiating the disciples who had gathered round him into the mysteries of mystical ecstacy. The foremost of his disciples was Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda was only twenty-three when his master died. During his pilgrimage tour of five years through the length and breadth of India, the experience which touched him to the heart was that of ignorance and grinding poverty of his countrymen. After visiting

the holy temple at Cape Comorin he stood on a rock on the shore of the Indian ocean and made a solemn vow to dedicate his life to the education and material as well as spiritual uplift of the poverty-stricken millions of India. Shortly after he participated in the Conference of World Religions which was held at Chicago and finding a good response to his message of faith and love, he made a lecture-tour of the United States, held seminars for teaching the philosophy of Vedanta, wrote a book under the title *Rajyoga* and started a Vedanta Society in New York. During his stay abroad he also visited Switzerland, Germany and England winning many disciples in London.

On his return to India Swami Vivekananda was given a rousing reception by his countrymen. He made another tour of the country this time exhorting the Hindu community to do the work of Social Service and Reform, specially that of the Education and uplift of women in the organized Western way. In 1897 he founded the Ramkrishna Mission to serve as a model for such organization. In 1899 he built the *Math* (monastery) at Bellur for the Sadhus of his order and set up the Advait Ashrama at Almora. After another preaching tour of the USA he returned to India and continued to work for his mission of love and service till his health broke down and he retired to his *Math* at Bellur teaching the Vedanta Philosophy to his disciples till his death in 1902.

A different interpretation of the Vedanta Philosophy based on intellectual inquiry quickened by inner experience was given by Shri Aurobindo Ghosh. Born at Calcutta in 1872 he had his whole education from the age of seven to twenty-one in England. After his return to India he passed thirteen years in the service of the Baroda State during which term he learnt Sanskrit and made a thorough study of Hindu religion and culture. During the Bengal agitation in 1906 he left state service and led the Nationalist movement in Calcutta. It was mainly at his instance that the Nationalist party adopted the Swadeshi and the Non-co-operation programme which was later taken up

by the National Congress. A profound religious experience which he had at this time, changed the whole course of his life. He had a vision of Shri Krishna who charged him with carrying to the Hindu community the message that it should rise to serve the Sanatana Dharma and through it the whole world. But Sri Aurobindo was convinced that the Hindus could succeed in liberating their country and promoting the Dharma only when they had reached a higher stage of spiritual development. So in order to meditate on the nature of spiritual development and its technique he retired to an Ashrama at Pondicherry in French territory (now transferred to the Indian Union) on the eastern coast of South India where he lived till his death. For seven years he issued a journal under the name of "The Arya" in which his autobiography *The Life Divine* appeared serially which was later published as a book in three volumes. His commentary on Bhagwad Gita had been published earlier.

Sri Aurobindo has exercised a deep influence on educated Hindus. His abstruse philosophical speculations are understood by few but all revere and love his almost legendary personality.

In this brief review of the new religious and intellectual movements in Hindu society we saw two opposite tendencies at work: (*a*) a liberal movement which expressed itself as eclecticism in religion, modernism in social outlook and moderatism in politics and (*b*) a conservative movement. The latter took two different forms: one advocating a return to Vedic religion and social life and the other making the philosophy of Vedanta the basis of religious life, reconciling it with Puranic Hinduism and changing the structure of Hindu society without changing its spirit. In politics all conservatives agreed in opposing foreign domination and supporting Hindu nationalism. The struggle between the liberals and the conservatives ended in the victory of the latter. The liberals continued as a small group exercising considerable influence on the intellectual life of the country but lost their hold over the

National Congress and were practically excluded from public life. This was good in so far as the conservatives quickened the movement of political freedom. But the conservative conception of nationhood, though more dynamic, was narrower than that of the liberals as it did not go beyond the Hindu community.

But fortunately India had three great leaders—a poet, a philosopher, and a moral teacher—who broadened the limits of Hinduism till it was co-extensive with the universal human family and created in Hindus the wider national outlook which persuaded them to try to build up in co-operation with Muslims and other minorities one Indian nation.

The poet Tagore makes his point of view patent in his *Greater India*. He emphasized the fact that India's history was not made by Hindus alone. Centuries ago Muslims arrived with their cultural heritage and became a part of her history. Then the British came with the cultural treasures of the West. New India is not the monopoly of any one creed or race. Here different religions and cultures have to live the harmonious life of peace and love. To create this atmosphere of peace and to develop this harmony and love is the greatest problem for India today. Tagore himself did his best to solve this problem. His international University, Vishwa Bharati, which he founded at Shanti Niketan in Bengal was meant to provide, by bringing together the best representatives of the Eastern and Western cultures, an atmosphere of universal brotherhood in which the Indian youth was to be nurtured.

The philosopher Radhakrishnan is the greatest representative of "Hindu Nationalism" if the word Nationalism is used in an elevated sense. He re-interpreted the great religious and cultural movements of Hinduism from the Vedic to the Neo-Vedantic as the various links of a single chain of evolution and its doctrine, ritual and social institutions as the logical consequences of one central idea. He made Hindus conscious of their mission to keep moral and spiritual values alive in this egoistic and materialistic

age and thus provided them with a lofty and inspiring ideal. But at the same time he exhorted them to give up the idea of reviving the past and to reconcile themselves with the present. While emphasizing the need of maintaining the vital link with history he warned against the vain attempt to reverse the course of history. The ideal he placed before them was to deduce from an intelligent study of national traditions the enduring norms and values and to make them the basis for building up a new life, using new forces to meet new needs and circumstances.

But to translate the ideas of the poet and the philosopher into action, to realize words in deeds, to widen the movement of high-caste "Hindu Nationalism" into that of Indian Nationhood embracing all castes and creeds was the task which the moral teacher—the greatest after Buddha—was destined to perform. Mahatma Gandhi's political activity to which we have already referred was only an off-shoot of his larger mission of the spiritual and moral regeneration of humanity. He strove for the freedom of India because only a free India could achieve his great moral ideal and through her example persuade other nations to do so.

He began by putting this great ideal—the realization of Truth through Non-violence—before his own Hindu community because he believed it to be an expression of the Hindu philosophy of life. His spiritual experience had revealed to him Absolute Reality in the form of Truth. So the pursuit of Truth was to him the ultimate moral value. This could be realized in every field of life, political, social or economic by achieving good ends through means which are equally good and pure. The greatest obstacle in the way which leads to Truth is uncontrolled passion of every kind, which Mahatma Gandhi expresses by the general term "violence". So the votary of truth has to cultivate " non-violence" in thought, word and deed.

The Mahatma's personal example, much more than his teachings, infused a new spirit in many Hindus of all classes —a spirit of self-discipline and self-sacrifice, of tolerance

and love—and prepared them for the peaceful struggle for freedom and progress.

But Mahatma Gandhi did not confine his message of truth and non-violence or his call to fight for the freedom of the country to Hindus alone. He was large-hearted enough to regard all minorities including Muslims just as much his own people as were the Hindus, and far-sighted enough to see that India could not win and maintain her freedom without incorporating the biggest and the most dynamic minority, the Muslims, into the national organism. So he made the welding of the "Muslim Nationalism" and "Hindu Nationalism" into the common Indian Nationhood, one of the main taks of his life.

He began by trying to create a cultural accord between the two communities as the basis of political unity. He knew that in the History of India cultural harmony meant above all religious harmony. His study of the Quran convinced him that the essential religious spirit of Islam, though not quite the same as that of Hinduism, was very much akin to it. He included in the liturgy used in his prayer-meetings which were attended mainly by Hindus, two *Surahs* from the Quran as he had some verses of the Bible. This was a symbol of his attitude to Muslims which produced for some years at least a harmonious atmosphere similar to that which had once been produced by the great leaders of Bhakti movement or by Kabir and Guru Nanak. Though the subsequent acrimonious quarrels between the Muslim League and the Congress leading to the division of India destroyed this harmony yet the fact that it had once been established in our time shows that pure religion free from any political alloy does not increase the distance between Hindus and Muslims but brings them nearer.

The key-stone of the cultural policy adopted by Mahatma Gandhi and under his influence by the National Congress was Hindustani as the National language of India. His intimate contact with the people all over India during his frequent tours had shown him that Hindustani (the common simpler form of Urdu and Hindi) was the mother-

tongue of over ten million people in the midlands of India and was understood by many more in other regions. So he moved the Congress to declare it to be the National language in both the Persian and the Devnagari scripts used for Urdu and Hindi respectively. The bitter opposition of this policy by many Hindus and strangely enough by most Muslims, whom it was specially designed to satisfy, was mainly responsible for disturbing the atmosphere of communal amity which Mahatma Gandhi had created with the co-operation of Nationalist Muslims, and for starting an internecine strife.

On account of this fatal fight Mahatma Gandhi's success in his great object, though phenomenal, was not complete. He did free India within the short period of thirty years from the domination of a power which was, at the beginning of that period, the greatest on earth. He did weld many Muslims and most Hindus into one nation. But he had to pay the price of losing about one fourth of the area and one fifth of the population of India which was formed into the independent state of Pakistan.

In the atmosphere of anti-Muslim feeling which prevailed in India as a natural reaction to the division of India and the bloody riots which followed it, Mahatma Gandhi's conciliatory policy towards the Muslims lost many Hindu supporters and after the Mahatma's death the Constituent Assembly of India with a great majority of Congress votes declared Hindi in the Devnagari script to be the National language of India though with a proviso that efforts should be made to keep Hindi as close as possible to the language of common parlance (which is known as Hindustani).

After the language clause had been incorporated into the National Constitution, all who had been opposed to it including the Muslims, submitted to it as best as they could. But the passionate propagators of Hindi have created great discontent not only among Muslims but also among speakers of other regional languages by failing to adopt an accommodating policy. Similarly linguistic minorities in the areas of regional languages are dissatisfied with the

attitude of the respective majorities. We shall discuss the language question more fully in the next chapter and try to show how the unnecessary tension which it is causing among the different cultural groups can be eased.

Here we have to point out that another front of cultural tension (perhaps with more potential danger than the linguistic one) is that where the liberal and conservative elements of the Indian nation are facing each other. In addition to the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ramrajya Parishad which carry on the conservative traditions of Hindu Nationalism, there is within the ranks of the National Congress itself the orthodox Gandhian group which has strong differences on some important questions with the liberal group carrying on the Government of the country. These differences among old comrades do not give any positive cause for alarm at present as they are kept in check by mutual respect and love, but unless they are reconciled, the work of building up a harmonious National Culture as a bastion of national unity will not proceed with the necessary speed and in the right spirit.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

PROSPECTS OF CULTURAL UNITY
THE PRESENT SITUATION

If we look at the cultural situation in India we will find that though the old pattern of unity in diversity has preserved itself, the ground-colour of unity has grown dimmer and the superficial colours of diversity have become more pronounced. Unless we soon exert ourselves to restore, perhaps with added emphasis on the common ground, the balance of the original design, this delicate balance may be lost forever.

Now let us take stock of all forces favourable and unfavourable to the growth of cultural unity in India which are at work to-day and see what we can do to re-inforce the former and to check the latter.

Beginning with unfavourable factors the most prominent obstacle in the cultural unity of India is the difference of languages. Foreigners, when they are told that in India there are fourteen regional languages and many more dialects belonging to four different linguistics families, are inclined to think that Indians are not one people but like inhabitants of Europe a motley of peoples with different cultures showing some common elements. But as we have seen, though the variety of languages in India is as great as in Europe and that of dress, food and general mode of living is even greater, the community of spiritual and moral ideas and social institutions has given to India an inner unity unknown to Europe. Still, there can be no doubt that on account of the linguistic barriers, people from different parts of India generally meet as utter strangers on all levels other than the religious level. Unless he happens to know English or Hindi a man from the non-Hindi-speaking regions finds it extremely difficult to make himself understood anywhere outside his own linguistic area. No doubt if he spends some time in the new place, he picks

up enough of the local language to get along in everday life, but in spite of a common background of religious belief, and general way of thinking, he cannot come into intimate contact with the people around him because there is no common medium for the exchange of deeper thoughts. So until the National language is universally known throughout the country an effective cultural unity is not possible.

But mere variety of languages could not be a positive danger to the unity of India if it were not accompanied by linguistic communalism amounting in many cases to chauvinism. It is this poison in our social organism which makes the movement for linguistic states, which is perfectly justified in itself on rational, historical and practical grounds, an object of grave concern to all who have the good of the motherland at heart.

To avoid any misunderstanding we should make it clear what we understand by the term "linguistic communalism". The consciousness in a group of people in India speaking the same language that they form a distinct community is natural and legitimate. But if it is associated with the feeling that those sons of the motherland living in the same area or an adjacent area, who speak a different language are outsiders in the worst sense of the term and should be treated as such, then such a linguistic communalism is harmful to national unity and as such is highly objectionable. Far more harmful and objectionable, however, is the tendency in a linguistic majority to withhold from the minority the safeguards guaranteed by the Constitution of India for preserving and promoting its language and culture including the primary education of its children through the medium of the mother-tongue, or to discriminate against individual members of the minority in state services and such other matters. It is this chauvinism, unfortunately present in India, which gives rise to the fear that after States are reorganized on a linguistic basis the cultural and other rights of the linguistic minorities in each State may be trampled upon. So when the question of defining the boundaries of proposed linguistic States comes up for

consideration, the places where one finds the worst tensions and conflicts, are the border areas where each of two or more language groups agitates for the inclusion of the area of its domicile in the State where its own mother-tongue would be the official language. If all groups living in each border area could be assured that to whichever State the area went, they would all receive equal treatment and their constitutional rights would be safe, one of the major difficulties besetting the problem of linguistic States would be removed.

But fortunately there is a favourable factor which leads us to hope that the disastrous consequences of linguistic communalism would not reach the extreme limit of political disintegration of the country, namely that the conflicting groups and regions have full confidence in the Nehru Government at the Centre and are prepared to accept its guidance in resolving cultural as well as other conflicts. This is a great asset which, if used with firmness combined with tact, can ensure rational linguistic policies being followed in all States designed to promote cultural harmony within each State and in the country as a whole.

Another powerful factor working for ultimate cultural unity in India is the community of political ideas which has developed in India within the last sixty or seventy years. Whatever harm British rule has done to India is compensated by one great blessing which the contact with a free democratic people brought her—a systematic schooling in the theory and practice of modern democracy. Though the study of the philosophical foundations of democracy and the enlightened liberal outlook which it produced, was confined to a small circle of intellectuals, the practical training in the rough and ready methods of representative government which the Indian people gradully received at all levels since Lord Ripon introduced local self-government, gave all Indians a uniformity of political outlook which is rare in Eastern, and not very common in Western countries at the present time.

Other influences of modern Western culture also provide

a common element in the thought and life of the educated class in India and as such serve as a valuable unifying force. The English language has been the only medium of communication on the higher intellectual level, between people from different parts of India, and it is likely to retain that position for some time to come, till Hindi has found nation-wide currency and has made enough progress to be able to express scientific ideas clearly and precisely. Moreover, the modern educated class in India which, influenced by the growing freedom movement in the country about the end of the last century had changed its course of slavish imitation of the colonial brand of civilization for one of discriminating assimilation of the best elements of genuine English Culture, is now trying to make the Western scientific attitude of mind, the liberal outlook on life, and the proper appreciation of economic-biological values an organic part of its mental make-up.

This new tendency towards a healthy modernism, if properly adjusted in our national life, can serve as a common meeting-ground for all culture groups and prove of great help in evolving a harmonious national culture. Even more important is this assimilation of the fundamental principles of the modern Western culture for our political and economic progress, for it is only on the basis of those principles that the democratic secular state and the planned industrial economy which we have chosen for ourselves can be securely founded.

The last, though by no means the least, favourable factor for the cultural unity of India is the fact that Hinduism constitutes for the great majority of the people of India a community of spiritual, moral and social ideas and institutions, which will become more pronounced, when a common national language has pulled down the barriers of linguistic differences. Then the problem of a common National Culture will be reduced to the comparatively simpler question of a cultural understanding between Hinduism and the religious minorities. That smaller minorities like the Sikhs, the Christians and the Parsis

have already adjusted themselves to Hinduism or will easily do so, will be admitted by all. It is only in the case of the largest minority, about thirty-five million Indian Muslims who form between ten and eleven per cent of the total population, that many people are inclined to doubt if they can fit into the general pattern of cultural life which is likely to develop in India. The argument that as Muslims had once coalesced with Hindus in a common Hindustani Culture, they can do so again would not satisfy the sceptics as the whole case of the Muslim League for the partition of India was based on the claim that Muslims had a culture entirely different from that of Hindus and therefore, are, or should be made, a separate nation. So it is necessary for us to examine the basic cultural positions of the Hindus and Muslims in India today and to see how far they can be brought into harmony with each other.

Now the question is how are we to proceed with this cultural survey ? As far as the concrete elements of the Hindu and Muslim cultures are concerned they can be easily observed and described. But the intangible subjective and objective mental elements which determine the informing spirit of each of these cultures are hard to get at specially now when both are passing through a period of transition and inner conflict. Such a task is for a poet whose mind is the mirror of his age and whose voice the voice of his people. Fortunately we had two such poets in our time, Tagore among the Hindus and Iqbal among the Muslims. None could understand better the spirit of the present day Hindu culture than Tagore and that of the Indian Muslim culture than Iqbal because it was mainly under their inspiration that the new cultural consciousness in their respective communities had come into being.

The intuitive apprehension of unity in diversity is, as we have already said, one of the fundamental characteristics of the Indian mind. This consciousness of the manifold phenomena converging on a central point which gives them reality and life is essentially a religious experience. So

the distinctive feature of the Indian character to which we referred above can be called religiousness. In fact in the Indian configuration of moral values, the religious value is the common centre of the various concentric circles representing other values. Even today, when the stream of religious consciousness in the minds of the orthodox has turned into a stagnant pool and in those of the modern educated into a shallow brook, the religious impulse is so strong that they cannot think of any philosophy of life which is not based on religion.

As we have seen all the new intellectual and cultural movements among the Hindus were inspired by religious motives and their leaders assigned to religion the same position in any system of life which the sun occupies in the solar system. Among them the most liberal and the greatest opponent of orthodoxy was Tagore. He had opened all the windows of his mind to the new brilliant light from the modern Western world which reveals the secrets of nature, its tremendous forces, the laws which control those forces and the art of using them for promoting the material welfare of man. But this Faustian ideal did not satisfy him as it failed to show him the way to establish a living and intimate contact with the Reality behind the world of phenomena for which his Indian soul yearned. So he had to turn to the old "dim religious light" of the Upanishads which had been guiding seekers after Truth for the last two thousand and five hundred years. Speaking of the relation between the artist and the world of Nature, Tagore gives us a glimpse of this *Weltanschauung*:

> The world asks: "Friend, have you seen me? Do you love me?—not as one who provides you with foods and fruits, not as one whose laws you have found out, but as one who is personal, individual?" The artist replies: "Yes, I have seen you, I have loved and known you—not that I have any need of you, not that I have taken you and used your laws for my own purposes of power. I know the forces that act and drive and lead to power

but it is not that. I see you, where you are what I am."[1]

It is this realization of the Absolute, sweeping away the distinction between "I" and "Thou" which is the central idea in the religious philosophy of the Hindus and which is to them the ultimate moral value.

Now as far as the Muslims are concerned, of course, the orthodox section regards religion as the pivot of all cultural life. But even among the modern educated class no thinker of any significance has conceived of any basis for culture other than religion. The most distinguished representative of this class was Iqbal. He was not a religious man but a philosopher and poet. As one who had his higher education in England and Germany he was even more open to the influence of Western thought than Tagore, and his approach to cultural problems was more scientific and critical. But he came to the same conclusion about the significance of religion as Tagore :

> Religion is not a departmental affair ; it is neither mere thought nor mere feeling nor mere action. Thus in the evaluation of religion, philosophy must recognize the central position of religion and has no other alternative but to admit it as something focal in the process of reflective analysis.[2]

Also the essential nature of religion is for Iqbal as for Tagore, the relation of man to Ultimate Reality. According to him : "The main purpose of the Quran is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the Universe."[3]

So we see that the cultural spirit of both Hinduism and Islam, as reflected in the ideas of Iqbal and Tagore, makes

[1] Tagore, *Personality*, p. 22 quoted by Radhakrishnan in *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., pp. 130-1.

[2] Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1944, p. 2.

[3] Iqbal, *ibid.*, p. 8.

religion the key-stone of the whole cultural structure and regards the relation between individual man and Ultimate Reality as the essence of religion. This means that the fundamental religious experience of Hindus and Muslims *before being subjected to intellectual analysis* by them, is as nearly identical today as it was in the minds of Hindu Bhaktas and Muslim Sufis during the Middle Ages.

But the subtle fleeting spiritual experience common to the Hindu and Muslim minds, when interpreted in intellectual terms by these two philosopher-poets, yields conceptions of the Ultimate Reality which are different from each other. Tagore, though he may appear to the superficial observer to conceive of the Ultimate Reality solely as personal God (as the great protagonists of Bhakti like Madhavacharya, Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya had done before him) is deeply influenced by the latest tendency of the Hindu mind to regard the concept of God in Bhakti and that of Brahma in Vedanta to be two aspects of the same Reality. While he generally refers to God as the Beloved for whom the human soul yearns he also speaks of him as beyond comprehension and free from name or form.

In another place Tagore says: "But there where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor colour, and never, never a word."[4]

Similarly the relation between man and God has two aspects in Tagore's philosophy. In the face of the personal God the human soul is conscious of its own independent existence but in relation to the Absolute it regards itself as non-existent apart from the one Ultimate Reality. He says: "In love, at one of its poles you will find the personal, at the other the impersonal. At one end you have the positive assertion—Here I am; at the other end the equally strong denial—I am not. Without this ego what is love? and again only with this ego how can love be possible?"[5]

[4] *Gitanjali*, p. 67 quoted by Radhakrishnan, *ibid.*, p. 47.

[5] *Sadhana*, pp. 114-15 quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 53.

This duality in the conception of God as well as in that of the relation between God and man, is explained by Dr Radhakrishnan in this way. When man tries to apprehend the Absolute Reality through his limited intellectual faculties he cannot go beyond the conception of a personal God whom he regards as a being separate from himself. But when he rises above the intellectual level to that of religious intuition, he is conscious of the perfect identity of God, Man and the Universe.

Now the conception of Ultimate Reality in Iqbal's philosophy is really a confluence of two streams of thought: (*a*) the Shahudi school of Muslim Sufis who derived their ideas from the Quran and (*b*) the modern European philosophies of Nietzsche and Bergson. Iqbal has tried to blend them into a harmonious whole. He regards Ultimate Reality as a "Personality" in the higher sense of the word : "Our criticism of experience reveals the Ultimate Reality to be a rationally directed life which in view of our experience of life, cannot be conceived except as an organic whole, a something closely knit together and possessing a central point of reference. This being the character of life, the ultimate life can only be conceived as an ego."[6]

But Iqbal warns against any analogy between the Absolute Being and human individuality. "The Ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative life. To interpret this life as an ego is not to fashion God after the image of man. It is only to accept the simple fact of experience that life is not a formless fluid, but an organizing principle of unity, a synthetic activity which holds together and focalizes the dispersing dispositions of the living organism for a constructive purpose."[7]

This gives us some idea of the difference in the interpretations of the fundamental religious experience given by Tagore and Iqbal. Tagore's God is essentially the Brahma of Vedanta; the conception of personal God which gives life and zest to his poetry is for him an inferior conception of reality to which the limited intellect of man is

[6] Iqbal, *ibid.*, p. 74. [7] Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

generally confined. On the other hand for Iqbal the true conception of God is that of "Unity of personality". Idealistic Monism very similar to that of the Vedanta in which many Sufis believed, is regarded by Iqbal as "the stage of the heart" an intermediate subjective stage in the search for truth. So both Tagore and Iqbal accept the theistic as well as the monistic conception. The difference lies in their estimates of the comparative value of these conceptions.

But before proceeding with the comparison of the fundamental philosophical ideas of Iqbal and Tagore, we have to emphasize once more the point that the difference between the religious and cultural consciousness of Hindus and Muslims, which their philosophies represent, exists only on the level of pure intellect. In the actual religious life of both Hindus and Muslims which is determined by direct emotional experience, and not by intellectual analysis of that experience, Idealistic Monism and Theism are regarded as of equal value and used indiscriminately as motives for inducing the devotional state of mind which an average person throughout the world, regards as the essence of religion. The Hindu chants or listens to Slokas from the Vedic scriptures or the Gita speaking of the Absolute Reality "without name or form" with as much depth of feeling as to rhapsodies of love and devotion to the personal God, Ishwar or one of His Incarnations. Similarly the Muslim offers his prayers to Allah or sings hymns in His praise in the same spirit of submission and ecstatic devotion in which he recites the verses of the Sufi poets identifying the Deity with the Universal Spirit which manifests itself in the whole world of creation including man. Most of the Hindu Bhajans (devotional songs) can be turned into Muslim Haqqani chants (hymns in praise of God) simply by substituting the name of Allah for that of the Hindu Deity or vice-versa. What is more, it is a common thing to see Hindus and Muslims actually attending each other's popular religious musical assemblies, the Qawwali and the Bhajan Mandli and being moved to devotional fervour in

spite of the fact that their methods of formal devotion and the whole systems of ritual are quite different from each other.

The real divergence between the religious philosophy of Tagore and Iqbal is seen in their conceptions of the human personality and the relation between man and God. Tagore regards the personality of the individual as real from the relative human point of view but unreal from the point of view of absolute truth. Whatever shade of reality the finite individual mind has, is reflected from the Infinite. Its destiny is to merge itself in the Infinite. With every step it takes towards its destiny it gains in reality but loses in individuality. The final surrender of the self is the height of bliss. "Man's abiding happiness is not in getting anything but in giving himself up to what is greater than himself."[8]

Iqbal, on the other hand, regards the finite personality of the individual as real as the Infinite Being of the Absolute. By drawing closer to the Infinite the finite human being does not lose its individuality. On the contrary his individuality becomes more complete, more pronounced. The logical difficulty which arises in thinking of the individual mind retaining its finiteness after joining the Infinite he solves in this way: "This difficulty is based on a misunderstanding of the true nature of the infinite. True infinity does not mean infinite extension which cannot be conceived without embracing all available extensions. Its nature consists in intensity and not extensity; and the moment we fix our gaze on intensity, we begin to see that the finite ego must be *distinct* though not *isolated* from the Infinite."[9]

The idea of the universe in Tagore's philosophy is taken bodily from the Vedanta. The physical world according to him is a phenomenon of the Absolute and as such has merely a relative existence. The finite human mind regards it as it regards itself, to be an independent reality. But

[8] Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 152 quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 72.

[9] Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

this is an illusion, *maya*. Self and non-Self, man and the physical world, are two aspects of the same Absolute Reality; one is active and the other passive. The physical world is the field in which the Self exercises its spiritual force. This force expresses itself not in a struggle with the physical world but in an intimate relation with it. "When a man does not realize his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him. When he meets the eternal spirit in all objects, then he is emancipated, for then he discovers the fullest significance of the world into which he is born, then he finds himself in perfect truth, and his harmony with the All is established."[10]

Iqbal's conception of the Universe like his conception of Absolute Reality is derived partly from the Quran and partly from the modern vitalistic philosophy. For Iqbal the world of Nature has reality not as something opposed to God but as "the habit of God". It is not "a mass of pure materiality occupying a void. It is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the Ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self."[11]

The finite human mind, however, regards the physical world as opposed to him and tries to overcome it. His knowledge of the world is not passive but dynamic. It is a kind of "insight" which is beyond the range of perception. "This insight is the ego's appreciation of temporal, spatial, and causal relation of things—the choice that is to say of data, in a complex whole, in view of the goal or purpose which the ego has set before itself for the time being. It is this sense of striving in the sense of purposive action and the success which I actually achieve in reaching my 'ends' that convince me of my efficiency as a personal cause." That is why Iqbal uses the term "subjugation" for man's perception of nature and regards this "subjugation" as a means of consolidating his individuality.

In the ideas of Tagore and Iqbal about God, man and

[10] Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 8 quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 19.

[11] Iqbal *op. cit.* pp. 53-54.

the world, are reflected their philosophies of life. For Tagore, as we have seen, the ideal of human life is one which has been dominating the Hindu mind since the days of the Upanishads: "Lifting the veil of ignorance which shows individual men as well as the physical world as separate entities and realizing the supreme truth that there is only one entity—that of the Absolute." "In the typical thought of India it is held that the true deliverance of man is the deliverance from *avidya*, from ignorance. It is not in destroying anything that is positive and real, for that cannot be possible, but that which is negative, which obstructs our vision of truth. When this obstruction, which is ignorance, is removed, then only is the eyelid drawn up which is no loss to the eye."[12] Then only he realizes the Absolute Truth.

This great object cannot be achieved through the senses and reason but only through the irrational faculty called intuition. So in training the mind it is necessary to keep the intellectual faculties in check and to awaken mystical consciousness through ascetic self-discipline. This religious ideal determines the moral ideal of human life. Realization of the supreme truth of Unitism arouses in us the feelings that all men are manifestations of the same reality. So we regard others as one with us and devote ourselves to their love and service. This is the root of all virtue. Conversely differentiating between men as different entities, regarding ourselves as separate from others and entertaining personal desires is the root of all vice. "It is our desires that limit the scope of our self-realisation, hinder our extension of consciousness, and give rise to sin, which is the innermost barrier that keeps us apart from our God setting up disunion and the arrogance of exclusiveness. For sin is not one mere action, but it is an attitude of life which takes for granted that our goal is limited, that our self is the ultimate truth, and that we are not essentially one but exist each for his own, separate individual existence."[13]

[12] Tagore, *Sadhana*, p. 72 quoted by Radhakrishnan, pp. 112-13.
[13] Tagore, *ibid.*, p. 111, quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 94.

It is the function of poetry to free man from the vicious personal desire. "We (poets) set men free from their desires."[14] The artist himself can get rid of desire only when he gives up the illusion of his existence as separate individuality and eliminates the distinction between Self and not-Self, when he can say to the universe, "I see you where you are what I am".[15]

It is this blissful joy of the vision of Reality which is the soul of Art and Poetry. "The rhetoricians in old India had no hesitation in saying that enjoyment is the soul of literature—the enjoyment which is disinterested."[16]

Now if we turn to Iqbal's philosophy of life, we feel as if we had been transported from the sphere of being to that of becoming, from the world of repose to that of strife. In his own way Tagore has also laid great emphasis on action, but his dynamism is an extraneous factor not an organic part of his basic philosophy. In Iqbal's *Lebensanschauung* action and struggle form the key-stone of the whole structure. For him the ideal of human life is not to merge one's self into non-self but the assertion and consolidation of the self. He conceives of God as the Absolute Self which is the archetype of individuality. Man has to try as best as he can to fashion himself according to the Divine model by the expansion and consolidation of his personality. This makes it necessary for him to apprehend the world round him creatively, that is to know the forces of nature and the laws of their action and to use them for his purpose. "Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould what is into what ought to be, the ego in him aspires in the interest of an increasingly unique and comprehensive individuality, to exploit all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career."[17]

The struggle for the conquest of Nature is of greater

[14] Tagore, *The Cycle of Spring*, p. 18, quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 121.
[15] Tagore, *Personality*, p. 22, quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 131.
[16] Tagore, *ibid.*, p. 8, quoted by Radhakrishnan, p. 126.
[17] Iqbal, *ibid.*, p. 73.

help in the apprehension of Reality than the ascetic self-discipline of the Sufi. Emphasizing the importance of the struggle with Nature for the development of human personality, Iqbal says: "The intellectual effort to overcome the obstruction offered by it besides enriching and amplifying our life, sharpens our insight, and thus prepares us for a more masterful insertion into subtler aspects of human experience."[18]

This deeper knowledge of the universe has not only intellectual but also great spiritual value. "In our observation of Nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship."[19] But Iqbal does not follow Nietzsche in regarding human personality as above good and evil or free from the authority of social laws. According to Iqbal the right development of personality is possible only by conforming to Divine Law in a society organized on the basis of "liberty, fraternity and equality". Like Tagore, Iqbal also values the idea of unity of mankind as the basis of moral life but he does not derive this idea from the unity of Absolute Reality but from the unity of creation. All men are one, not because they are moments in the one Absolute Existence but because they have been created by the same Creator, have been endowed with the same nature and made to conform to the same law of life. The development of the individual personality, within the bounds of this law to the point where man is initiated into the mystery of Reality, controls the forces of Nature, shares in eternal life and deserves the title of the "Vice-regent of God on earth" is the ideal of morality as well as of art.

Iqbal agrees with Tagore that the object of all art is the intuitive apprehension of reality. But from his point of view this apprehension is not passive but active, not merely perceptive but creative. So his conception of the functions of Art turns out to be very much different from that of Tagore. According to Iqbal, Art, far from trying to eliminate the distinction between self and non-self, should

[18] Iqbal, *ibid.*, p. 15. [19] Iqbal, *ibid.*, p. 58.

further emphasize this distinction, that is, it should consolidate and perfect the indviduality of man and thus make him immortal. It should never induce repose, mellowness, acquiescence but a creative restlessness, a dynamic vivacity, a prophetic zeal. "What Art aims at is the eternal flame of life, not these few moments of breathing like sparks. . . . Be it the poet's chant or the minstrel's melody ; what makes the flowers melancholy is no morning breeze. Fallen nations do not rise without a miracle. True Art strikes its way through the Nile like the miraculous wand of Moses."[20]

Thus we have a glimpse of *Weltanschauung* of the modern educated classes of Hindus and Muslims as reflected in the philosophies of Tagore and Iqbal. We find that in the depths of the Indian mind two streams of religious consciousness spring from the same source and flow in the same channel so that no real differentiation is possible between them. It is only on coming to surface on the level of analytical thought that they divide themselves into two distinct rivers taking different courses, known under the name of Hindu and Muslim religions. But we shall see presently they meet again in the wider expanse of social moral and aesthetic life.

Looking at the concrete aspects of the cultural life of Hindus and Muslims we find that in spite of the separatist movements of the last two hundred years most of the common factors which had been partly the causes, partly the effect of the cultural synthesis which took place in the time of Akbar the Great, are still there, and new common ground has been created by the influences of the modern Western culture.

Though the moral ideas of Hindus and Muslims are based on different philosophical outlooks, yet owing partly to the basic similarity of their religious experiences and partly to the common physical and economic circumstances their practical moral codes are very much alike. We shall give only two illustrations. Next to love and devotion to

[20] Iqbal, *ibid.*

God, human affections are regarded as the highest virtues both by Hindus as well as Muslims. Altruism, social service, generosity, kindness to one's relatives, hospitality—all qualities, in short, which are covered by the Christian term "Charity"—are valued by both much more than the four cardinal virtues of the Greeks and, what is more remarkable, both show exactly the same tendency to carry these amiable virtues to the extreme where they degenerate into vices. Altruism, service, and hospitality often expose good men to unscrupulous exploitation by wastrels or rogues. Generosity has created not only professional beggars but many other varieties of parasites, kindness to relatives is very apt to take the form of nepotism. "Muruwwat" an Arabic word meaning "chivalry" was once used to denote the general kindliness of the Indian character. Its meaning has now significantly changed to something like spineless benevolence.

Another set of virtues to which Hindus and Muslims in India attach much greater value than perhaps any other people, are temperance, modesty and chastity. The most obvious difference between their common moral code and that of the Western people is that while the Westerners regard crime against property much more serious than sexual lapses, Indian Muslims and Hindus generally take a much more serious views of an act of incontinence than, for example, of theft.

Even more striking is the uniformity of social, specially family life of Hindus and Muslims. One would have expected that Muslims whose religion does not recognize any form of social distinctions, would have no social hierarchy like that of Hindus, but we find that they have actually developed something like caste by dividing themselves into racial and hereditary vocational groups. No doubt there is some difference in the relations which the Muslim social groups have with one another and those which the Hindu castes or sub-castes have among themselves, but it is difference of degree, not of kind. For instance, though even orthodox Muslims belonging to

different social groups freely dine together, which their Hindu counterparts would not dream of doing, they generally do not inter-marry.

The family life of both communities shows exactly the same pattern. Their family is not like that of the Western people, a small unit consisting of a married couple and the children, but a much bigger one including even distant relations with a common home and often a joint purse.

Though the Hindu Dharma Shastra insists on a joint family property and the Muslim Shariah wants each legacy to be divided among the wife and the children of the deceased, such divisions are not common in practice. In any case, the average Hindu and Muslim family has a common budget controlled by the father or the eldest earning member of the family. Often the whole family, even if very large, lives on the earnings of one person who slaves himself to death. The members of the family not only share one another's weal and woe but assume the right of interfering in every affair public or private in one another's life with the result that they, specially the ladies of the family, are often engaged in a battle royal. But this civil war immediately ceases and all parties present a united front, if a danger from outside threatens any member of the family.

Obedience to one's elders specially one's parents is the sacred duty of every Hindu and Muslim. Equally binding on a wife is obedience to her husband. The position of women in Muslim and Hindu families is more or less the same. Though Islam has given more rights to woman, she is in practice regarded inferior to man in Muslim and Hindu families alike, excepting a few specially enlightened ones. In Muslim society the seclusion of women is much more strict and their education much less attended to, so that many of them are either ignorant of the rights which the personal law of Islam (honoured by the Indian Republic as it was by the British Government) has given them or are so helpless that they cannot fight for them.

The food, dress and the general way of living of both

communities is, barring minor differences, the same. There are variations but they are regional not communal. Where the influence of the Hindustani culture still persists, specially in Northern India, the rites and ceremonies connected with birth, marriage, death observed by Hindus and Muslims are very similar. A foreigner coming to India finds it easier to distinguish between people of two different regions than those of different communities belonging to the same region.

But the most powerful force which binds Hindus and Muslims in a community of deepest feelings is today, as it was during the Moghul period, that of the Fine Arts. Though their philosophical concepts of Art (as Tagore and Iqbal have told us) are different, the unity of the aesthetic experience, gushing forth from the depth of their hearts washes away all intellectual differences. As soon as they enter into the realm of Art, all sons of Mother India, Hindus, Muslims and others feel that the common stream of their life flows with the same rythm, are agitated by the same storms, and soothed down by the same calm. Even people from different regions who do not know a word of one another's language understand the common language of the heart which uses tones and colours instead of words. In every branch of Art, Hindu and Muslim artists show a spirit of real brotherhood which is the brightest sign of hope for the cultural unity of India.

When we have added to all these common factors in the cultural life of Muslims and Hindus the unifying force of modern Western influences—English language, democratic ideas and institutions, general liberal outlook, scientific attitude of mind and proper appreciation of economic-biological values, which have inspired a limited but leading section of Hindus and Muslims—we are faced with a formidable array of facts which must lead to the conclusion that the Muslim minority can easily fit into a pattern of National Indian Culture, provided this culture allows for a healthy diversity within the range of unity and does not insist on absolute uniformity.

But unfortunately the language policy of some Indian states supported by a considerable body of Hindu opinion, gives Muslims some reason for the fear that the majority community does envisage a uniformity of culture which would not leave much room for the free development of their own cultural idiosyncrasies. The mental frustration which is the result of this suicidal separatist policy of the fatal decade (1937-1947) combined with the economic distress caused by abolition of Zamindari (Landlordism) and the curtailment of their share in the state services, has filled the majority of the Muslim middle class with a resentment which makes them hypersensitive to any interference with the cultural rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution of the Indian Republic. We shall discuss their specific grievances in the next chapter. But it would not be superfluous to say a word about the general problem of the Indian Muslims because very few non-Muslims realize that there is such a problem existing, much less that it is urgent and demands a speedy solution. The Muslim middle classes had, at least in Northern India, depended mainly on Zamindari or Jagirdari and state services for their livelihood, throughout the seven and a half centuries since the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, to the present day. They have lost the Zamindari rights and are gradually losing much of their share in state services (which was out of all proportion to their percentage in the total population). Most of them are really faced with starvation because other avenues of employment are already overcrowded. It has to be admitted that the measures taken by the state which have hit them, were justified but the fact remains that a whole class of people is in a hopeless plight. It is true that the problem of unemployment is not confined to the middle class Muslims, but theirs is much more acute than that of any single group and requires special attention.

The bearing of this on the theme which we are discussing is that the feeling in the most important minority, incidentally in a state of mental and economic stress, that its

cultural rights are not respected, is fraught with danger for the cultural unity and progress of the country, and all reasonable efforts should be made to remove this feeling. But we must make it clear that the danger to which we referred, is not that dissatisfied Indian Muslims would resort to political intrigue with Pakistan because they are neither in a mood nor in a position to do so. There is more possibility of some of them becoming the tools of subversive forces inside the country. But the real and very serious danger is that they, who have made a valuable contribution to Indian culture and prosperity in the past and are capable of doing so in the future, may fall a prey to despondency and despair, indolence and inactivity and become a dead weight hampering the progress of the country. It must be remembered that Muslims consist of a very large percentage of the sons of the soil, belonging to the oldest Indian stock and a small percentage of those who came later, between the eighth and sixteenth century, but have now been completely Indianized, so that the community as a whole is an organic part of Indian society which responded to the call of Islam because it touched some innermost chord in the Indian soul. If Indian Muslims are down and out, it would mean that a vital part of the Indian organism, which supplies it with some essential ingredients necessary for its harmonious development, will be paralysed with disastrous results for the whole.

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To sum up the foregoing discussion there is a great deal of actual cultural unity among the various linguistic and religious communities in India, including the Indian Muslims and the potential for building up a new National Culture is high. But this national culture has to aim, not at absolute uniformity, but at a perfect harmony of a variety of regional and sectional cultures. It has further to be broad-based and has to blend into a harmonious whole the best elements in our cultural heritage of the

Vedic Hindu, the Buddhist, the Puranic Hindu and the Mughal Hindustani cultures, as well as the best of what we have received and can receive from the modern Western Culture, into a homogenous whole.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

TOWARDS A NEW NATIONAL CULTURE

1—*The Language Problem*

THOUGH INDEPENDENCE brought a final solution of the vital political problem, the cultural tangle far from being resolved seemed to become worse. As an immediate effect of freedom, the influence of Western Culture and of the English language showed signs of decline and the veneer of uniformity which these two elements had given to the cultural life of the country began to wear off revealing the full diversity of regional cultures. Specially the question of the official and national language gave rise to grave differences. It seemed that the foundation of our national unity instead of growing stronger was in the danger of becoming weaker than before.

The raising of the language controversy, immediately after independence, was full of perils but it could not be avoided. The adoption of a democratic constitution which followed independence made a change in the official language inevitable. As long as power was in the hands of a few Englishmen who did not require the consent of the common people for ruling over them, English could serve as the official language. But as soon as real representative government was set up, it was quite clear that no government could carry on without keeping in close contact with the people and enjoying their confidence which could only be done by speaking to them in their own language. The obvious implication was that English had to be replaced as the language of official administration by each regional language in its own region. But at the same time a common national language was needed which could be used, in place of English, for the official business of the Union, for correspondence between the Union and the States and between one State and another.

Before independence, the Indian National Congress had, ıder the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, recognized Hindusni, the language of common intercourse in Northern dia, as the national language with the obvious implication at it would be the language of the Central Government free India. But when the time came for drawing up e Constitution of free India, circumstances had changed. ter a sharp and long controversy, between the supporters Hindustani and Hindi in the Constituent Assembly was decided that Hindi in the Devnagari script was to the official language of the Union. Each State was given e power to adopt any language or languages for its official siness.

Objections against Hindi being made the official language re based on three factors: (1) the advocates of Hindusni held that Sanskritized literary Hindi was very far noved from the spoken language even in Hindi speaking gions, and the number of those who understood it was mparatively small. (2) Those who did not speak Hindi, ecially those who spoke South Indian languages protested at if Hindi took the place of English as official language an early date, they would not be able to compete with ndi-speaking people for Central and All India services. People with Western education generally argued that ither Hindi nor any other language would, for a long ne to come, be able to serve as the vehicle of official siness specially to express precisely higher conception law and jurisprudence.

In view of these objections adequate safeguards were ovided in the Constitution. To make Hindi as widely mprehensible as possible a clear directive was given at it should be so developed as to assimilate simple and mmonly understood words, forms and styles from Hindusni and other Indian languages. To avoid the dangers of early change-over from English to Hindi it was proded that English would remain as the official language of e Union until 1965 and if necessary its use would go after that date. As for the language of law, that is the

language of the Supreme Court, the High Courts and the Bills and Acts of Parliament, it was decided that English would continue indefinitely to occupy that position until it was changed by an Act of Parliament.

As a further precaution a provision was made in the Constitution that before the new linguistic policy was put into force two Presidential Commissions would be appointed, each after an interval of 5 years, to elicit public opinion about the various aspects of this policy to consider it and to recommend to the President how this policy was to be implemented without harming either the legitimate interests of any section of the people or the larger interest of the country. The first of these Commissions was appointed in 1955 and submitted its report in 1956. For some time a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of the Parliament has been considering the report and it is now going to be discussed at the plenary session of the Parliament.

It is difficult to say that all the linguistic problems which the country is facing will find an early and easy solution. Still during the last two or three years, specially since the publication of the Language Commission's report there is in the country, with the exception of one or two states, more clear and constructive thinking. Linguistic fanaticism is subsiding and people appear inclined to solve language problems in a spirit of understanding and compromise. If, in accordance with the recommendations of the Language Commission, all the major Indian languages recognized by the Constitution are allowed to flourish within their own spheres, English is given an important place in our Constitution as an international cultural and scientific language and a modified form of Hindi is accepted by the whole country as the common national language, the work of building up a new national culture will become easier. With the cementing force of a new national language we will be able to build out of the remnants of the common Hindustani culture and the best elements of the vast material furnished by the various regional languages a new national culture.

2—*The Problems of a New Cultural Synthesis*

Such a synthesis of regional or group cultures into a common national culture has already been achieved thrice in the history of India—first by the fusion of Aryan and Dravidian, then of Hindu and Buddhist and lastly of Hindu and Muslim cultures. Today we are again faced with the same problem. But this time it is more complex and has several new aspects.

Before we can think of a rational solution to this complex problem, we must get rid of the futile mentality which urges some of us to try to revive the cultural life which prevailed during the Vedic Age or the Puranic Age. For this implies the exclusion of all elements specially those of Muslim culture, which came from outside but have been so completely assimilated in the intellectual, aesthetic and social life of India that they have, as it were, entered the stream of the life-blood running through the veins of Indian culture. The attempt to separate these ingredients and get them out of the system through a process of blood-letting will never succeed in its object. It will only enervate our culture and cause it to suffer from pernicious anaemia.

The first thing then we have to realize is that the dominating complexion of the present common culture which was evolved during the Medieval period of our history is that of North Indian Culture. That is why its influence over the South has been very limited. To be truly national it has to assimilate the best elements of the various regional cultures specially those of South India. This requires maximum cultural contact with one another. Several important steps have already been taken in this direction. The Union Ministry of Education has started a Youth Festival which is held in the beginning of winter every year. It is an occasion for university students from all parts of the country to live together for a few days and to give one another glimpses into the cultural life of their respective regions—their music, dance, drama, painting and sculpture, etc. Earlier three academies were set up,

one for the promotion of representational arts, another for music, dance and drama and a third for literature. But these academies which bring together their members and fellows only for a few days in the years cannot provide the continuous and permanent contact among the representatives of group-cultures required for the process of fusion of these multifarious cultural elements into the lasting amalgam of National Culture. If they are to serve as the cultural laboratories of the Gupta and Mughal periods, they should be turned into institutes where the fellows are in permanent residence and receive liberal pensions so that, free from all financial worries, they can devote themselves wholeheartedly to the great object of evolving common national patterns of art and literature, which give outward expression to that inner spirit of unity animating all the various peoples of the vast land called India.

Another course which could be adopted to pull down the barriers separating the various linguistic groups from one another and to awaken and foster the spirit of cultural unity among them, is the exchange of teachers on a large scale. Selected teachers from each linguistic region who know several Indian languages could be induced by liberal terms of service to offer themselves for serving, under an exchange system, in different linguistic areas for sufficiently long periods so that they can enter into the spirit of regional cultures and recognize in them local variants of the common culture of India. These teachers will prove, like the fellows of the National Academies to be the makers as well as the messengers of National Culture.

The second aspect of Cultural Synthesis which we are aiming at, is that we have to accept now, of our own free will, though with discrimination, cultural influences from the West which have so far been forced on us by the political and economic pressure of the British rule. Our attitude to Western culture must change after independence. As long as we had the feeling that it was an imposition by foreign rulers and an instrument for enslaving and exploiting us we could never, as a people, like it at heart and some

of us were its bitter opponents. But after independence when we are ourselves responsible for shaping our life we have to take an unprejudiced objective view of modern Western civilization and to see which of the things it has given us so far are of real use and value to us and what it has to give us in future.

If we review the trend of development in our country during the last ten years we will find that all the three fundamental objectives which we have before us in the reconstruction of our country—a secular democratic state, a socialist pattern of society and industrial progress—are based on ideas which have come to us from the West. It is true that in trying to realize these ideals we do not want to follow the West blindly but to go our own way adjusting Western ideas to our changing needs and circumstances. Still we have to make a close study of the social and political institutions in Europe and America and learn many things from them. Specially for the material resources and the technical aid which we require for building up a modern industrial society we must look up to these industrially advanced countries. So we can say that while in shaping our spiritual, moral and cultural life in the narrower sense of the term, we depend largely on our own heritage; in the reconstruction of our political and economic life we have, to a great extent, to rely for help and guidance on the West.

But we should make it clear to ourselves that if we want to succeed in our plans for industrialization we must, to some extent, revise our scale of moral values. No nation which despises economic value as gross materialism can make the persistent effort and the immense sacrifice necessary for industrial progress. If we respect human life, the material resources required to keep men alive are also worthy of our respect. If we think it is our sacred duty to rescue millions of our fellow-countrymen from the pain and humiliation of poverty, we should regard as equally sacred the production of wealth required for this purpose. Surrounding oneself with the maximum amount of luxuries

may be materialism in the worst sense; but trying to provide one's fellowmen with the minimum necessities of life to enable them to live a life of dignity, self-respect and comfort is not materialism, but the way to the greatest heights of spiritualism which the chosen men of God have shown us repeatedly.

Another requisite for industrial progress is that we should give up the superstitious and obscurantist outlook on life and study modern science not only for satisfying our thirst for knowledge but also for alleviating the pangs of hunger gnawing at the vitals of millions in Asia and Africa.

Similarly for building up a secular democratic state and a socialist society we have not only to borrow from the West many political and economic institutions and adapt them to our conditions but also to take lessons from them in religious and intellectual tolerance and in fostering the spirit of liberty and equality. We shall have no hesitation in drawing as freely on the ideas and practices of the peoples of Europe and America in working our Constitution as we did in making it, or in taking moral inspiration from them as we are taking their financial and technical aid in executing our Five Year Plans.

But if our new National Culture is to be built on a broad and strong foundation we have to perform another act of cultural synthesis by harmonizing the upper and middle class culture which is mainly confined to urban areas with the rural culture of the mass of the people. Though it is true that the higher and richer form of culture is found everywhere in the cities, the roots which give it life and strength lie deep in the rural soil. It is, therefore, essential for the development of a healthy and vigorous culture that there is close contact between urban and rural life and both are constantly influenced by each other. In India this interaction is all the more necessary because here the larger cities have, during the last one hundred and fifty years, accumulated a variety of cultural elements from the East and the West but they seem to lack the

leaven which can permeate and transform them into a harmonious whole. The leaven can be provided by the fundamental cultural values which still subsist under layers of poverty and ignorance in the simple life in the villages.

Formerly smaller towns used to serve as places of cultural exchange between the cities and the villages. But now owing to economic changes specially the abolition of Zamindari these towns are dwindling into villages and the contact of urban and rural cultures with each other is less sensitive. The real check to this danger can only come through a wise industrial policy which instead of concentrating industries in a few big cities tends to disperse them over the countryside and helps to develop villages into industrial towns of moderate size. Meanwhile the policy of encouraging folk art and culture and introducing it to urban areas in various ways, specially through the radio which our Government is pursuing is useful as far as it goes. But it is necessary to supplement it with carrying urban art and culture to the villages. The propagation of art and culture should, along with the promotion of economic progress, sanitation and education, be given a place in Community Development Projects. Artists from the city should go to the villagers and impart to them the elegance of form and refinement of taste which is the flower of culture and imbibe from them the simple faith in life and love of man which is its fruit.

But a synthesis of the cultural values of the city and the village, or of the classes and the masses into a broader National Culture is not possible unless we get rid of the narrow aristocratic and individualistic concepts of art and culture which are dominating our minds and form a clear idea of the cultural pattern in a democratic socialist society. The aristocratic view developed during the feudal age was that culture was the expression of the specific values of the higher classes of society. It was their creation and they alone could enjoy it. As for the individualistic concept of culture it was based on the theory that culture was the efflorescence of the creative impulses of man and

flourished in an atmosphere where these impulses could express themselves without any restrictions. It was this theory that gave birth to non-conformism in religion, to capitalism in economic life to a variety of exotic and unintelligible styles in art. Here we need not discuss these ideas in detail. It is enough to say that if we believe in a democratic socialist society, we cannot possibly accept the aristocratic and individualistic concepts of culture. Because to regard higher culture as the privilege of any particular class is against the spirit of democracy and to permit the individual to give free expression to his idiosyncrasies even if they are harmful to society is the negation of socialism. In a society based on the proper balance of freedom and equality, culture should be regarded as a harmonious expression of universal human values common to all men high or low, rich or poor and should be within the reach of all. Similarly the individual should be given a large measure of freedom to use his talents for the creation of art and culture in any way he likes, but at the same time should be discouraged from producing what is against the larger interests of society or unintelligible to others. This will not hinder but help the creation of true art.

But this does not mean that the State should exercise undue pressure on the artist for keeping art and culture subservient to the interests of society. It should confine itself only to preventing the productions of art and culture from infringing the civil or common law. Going beyond this and giving the State the right to interfere in the cultural life of the people and determine its objectives or the course it should follow would be strangling the freedom without which it is impossible for art and culture to flourish. In a democratic society the function of directing and controlling art and culture can only be entrusted to public opinion. The welfare state which we are striving to create in India should regard it as its duty to encourage art and culture by giving financial aid to cultural institutions and individual artists but should not make it an instrument

of restricting their freedom of thought and action and exploiting them for its purpose. However, some measure of state control on cultural life is necessary. The state must have the power of making laws for preserving the cultural wealth of the country from damage or destruction ; for instance, a law to prevent rare books or works of art from going out of the country, to punish those who damage historical buildings or other objects of archaeological interest, to ban obscene books, pictures or films, etc. It is difficult to draw clear lines of demarcation for such control. But it can broadly be said that it should be exercised not in the interest of the ruling or of any one party or community or class but only in public interest or to safeguard public morals.

To sum up what has been said so far, the cycle of history, has again brought us to the point where centrifugal forces are at work and there is a danger that the country might face cultural disintegration once more leading first to political anarchy and then to foreign rule. We have to solve this problem as it has been solved before, that is, by preserving regional and group cultures but along with them building up a new National Culture which will integrate our emotions and aspirations, thereby ensuring the unity and the freedom of the country. The best way to achieve this is to give up our pet notions of revivalism and make, what is left to us of our common heritage of Hindustani Culture, the foundation of the National Culture and build upon it freely borrowing from the rural and urban cultures of the various regions and from the Western Culture, any thing we require for making the structure strong and lasting, comfortable and beautiful. This cultural synthesis should start with National Language for language is the soul of culture.

Unity in diversity has always been the distinguishing feature of Indian Culture. We should keep it as our aim in our efforts to build up the new National Culture. If we succeed in this we will not only solve our own problem but might help through our example in the solution of the

most important problem the world is confronted with today, that of achieving the unity of man in the diversity of of nations.

As far as our social life is concerned independence has no doubt solved some of our pressing problems but it has given rise to some new problems too. The main difference between the trends of social change before and after independence is this. Formerly advocates of social reform tried, in keeping with their liberal point of view, to remedy all social evils by reforming the individual without changing the general structure of society. But even the semblance of liberal democracy, such as we had before independence, made some change in the traditional social system necessary. Now that free India has decided to build up a socialist pattern of industrial society a fundamental change in the whole social structure is imperative. No doubt this will create many difficulties too. But instead of making the vain attempt to resist the changes which are the inevitable results of our industrial policy we should face the difficult problems which they create for us squarely and seek their solution.

The urgent need of some social reforms like the emancipation of women, the abolition of untouchability among the Hindus, the liberalization of the laws of marriage and inheritance was realized by some enlightened Indian leaders as early as the beginning of the last century. Progressive religious and social movements, led by the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Rama Krishna Mission, the Sarvajnik Sabha, and the Servants of India Society were directed towards these reforms. After the First World War, Mahatma Gandhi started, along with the non-violent campaign for freedom a "Constructive Programme" of which social reform specially the abolition of untouchability was an essential creed. He gave to the so-called untouchables the dignified title of Harijans and tried to secure for them social and religious rights equal to with those of caste Hindus, along with special economic and political safeguards. As a result of all these movements, ideas of

social reform had pervaded a large section of society and had begun to make an impact on the life of the people. The pressure of educated public opinion forced even the British Government which, as a matter of political expediency was inclined to side with orthodox sections, to enforce some social reforms by taking legislative measures such as those for preventing child marriage or for giving Harijans the right of entry into temples.

As we said before, the spirit which animated the movements of social reform before independence was that of respect for human liberty and dignity. The advocates of reform wanted every individual, irrespective of sex, caste or class, to be given full opportunity for self-development and self-expression. They generally believed that this could be done without any fundamental change in the social structure. For instance they thought that it was not necessary or desirable to abolish the caste system or the joint family system on which the whole fabric of Hindu society rested. Their purpose could be achieved by merely relaxing some of the restrictions imposed by these systems. But the fact was that, hemmed in by the caste on the one hand and the joint family on the other, the individual did not get enough liberty or opportunity for self-development and self-expression. So some daring reformers challenged the caste system and carried on a campaign to put an end to it. As for the institution of joint family, there was no organized movement to oppose it but signs of dissatisfaction could be seen and cases of open revolt were not rare.

The advent of independence naturally gave an impetus to social reform and the combined efforts of the Government and the private agencies accelerated its progress. As far as legal provisions are concerned our Constitution gave absolute equal rights to men and women, to Harijans and Caste Hindus and our Parliament has enacted several liberal and progressive laws about marriage and inheritance. But so far practice in these matters has lingered far behind the law. The Government, no doubt, does all it can to enforce these laws. Special concessions are given to Harijans

in education as well as in employment stipends. Women are given offices and honours according to their merits. The courts of law do them full justice in cases relating to marriage and inheritance which come before them. But in society old prejudices persist and inequality and injustice prevail as before. To root them out is not in the power of Governments and Courts but requires the reforming zeal and missionary effort of private individuals and institutions. In social, as in cultural life, reform and progress can only be made through the willing co-operation of the State and the people and care must be taken to define and delimit their spheres of action.

As a general principle we can say that social reform should be effected in three stages :

1. First individual advocates and institutions of social reform should prepare public opinion for the desired social change.
2. When people as a whole agree and opposition is confined to die-hards or vested interests, Government should adopt legislative measures to bring about the change.
3. Then the same agencies which initiated the reform should help the Government in publicizing the provisions of the new laws and in enforcing them.

Private agencies and individuals, therefore, have to shoulder a far greater burden than the State in the work of social reform. Theirs is a twofold task in this critical period through which the country is passing. They have to see that the measures of social reform which have won the support of public opinion and secured the sanction of law are carried out as soon as possible and, have also to prepare the people for the basic change in the structure of society which is already being increasingly felt in the country.

As we said in the beginning the circumstances which are leading us towards this change are the direct results of our

political freedom. Here we will refer to two of them. Firstly the fundamental human rights guaranteed by our Constitution are producing, at least among the educated people, a consciousness of individual freedom and responsibility. Secondly, as is always the case in the initial stages of industrial progress, the cost of living is rising without a corresponding rise in the income of the majority of the people. These two factors have combined to force every adult man and woman, and in some cases even children, to leave the sheltered life of the family and to work for their living away from home in offices, shops or factories. Consequently larger joint family units are breaking up into smaller ones consisting of husband, wife and children. Moreover, the number of men and women who marry very late in life or do not marry at all, is increasing. At the same time people are migrating from the villages into towns which are rapidly expanding. These changes are giving rise to fresh problems. For instance the social and moral difficulties faced by lonely defenceless working girls in towns, the problem of the bringing up of children who are left alone while their parents go to work, the problem of old men and women living in poverty and ill-health, who have nobody to look after them, the shortage of housing, the rising number of slums and its adverse effects on the health and morality of the people. Now social reformers can react to these new changes in one of these three ways. They can either offer outright opposition to industrial progress, or struggle, in spite of such progress, to preserve the old social structure and prevent the changes leading to these nasty problems or try, while accepting industrialization and the consequent social changes, to solve the problems created by them.

There are in our country strong opponents of industrial progress. They are the people who think that material comfort is an obstacle in the way of spiritual salvation and advocate an ascetic or at least an austere way of life. As the whole purpose of industrial progress is to produce the maximum means of material comfort, their opposition

to industrialization is understandable. But strangely enough most of our reformers regard industrial progress as the only means of removing poverty and disease and a necessary step towards raising the moral and spiritual level of society and yet they hope to prevent any fundamental change in the social system so as to avoid the dangers to which we have referred. The history of all industrial countries point towards the fact that industrialization made a change in the social structure inevitable and all efforts to avoid it were in vain. So the only rational and constructive approach seems to be that, if we aspire to be an industrially advanced society, we must be prepared for tremendous changes and the problems arising out of them. Other countries have faced these problems and succeeded in solving them through prudent planning, social legislation and movements of social welfare and reform. There is no reason why we cannot profit by their examples and adopt measures suitable to our conditions to avoid the undesirable social consequences of industrial progress.

But in order to have a democratic society with a common culture and common ideals, we have to infuse into our education a spirit of democracy and organize it into an integrated whole. The first of these objectives demands that all boys and girls, without any distinction of class or caste should be educated together under a system of free and compulsory primary education and all talented children should have an equal opportunity of going up for higher education. The second objective implies that the gulf between general and vocational, as well as between secular and religious education should be bridged, at least at the primary stage, and a common pattern of integrated fundamental education be provided for all children throughout India. In a society where children of various classes and communities are brought up in separate and limited mental environment it is not possible to build up a common national culture.

As far as the first objective is concerned our Constitution laid down that free and compulsory education should be

provided for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 within ten years of the coming into force of the Constitution, i.e. by 1960. But though the Union Government and some of the States have done a great deal for the expansion of education at all levels we are still far from realizing the objective of 8 years' compulsory education for all. Up to the end of 1956 a little over 50 per cent of children between 6 and 11 numbering 2 crores and 48 lakhs were receiving education in the primary schools. The number of those between 11 and 14 was no more than 51 lakhs. By the end of Second Five Year Plan, i.e. by 1961 these numbers are expected to go up to 3 crores and 25 lakhs and 64 lakhs respectively. But in the meantime the total number of children will also go up with the general increase in population. So there will be no great increase in the percentage of children in schools. As far as the equality of opportunity for pursuing higher education is concerned the position is still more unsatisfactory. Obviously the children of poor families can only go beyond the primary stage with the help of stipends from the Government. But the Government have done little so far except giving a number of scholarships to the children of Harijans and other backward classes. No doubt enormous financial resources are required for providing free primary education to the whole age group 6 to 14 and at the same time giving all deserving and talented children stipends foi studying in High Schools and Universities and no Government can manage to find such vast sums of money unless it is helped by the local bodies and general public. But we must remember that unless we give every child in the country the best education which it is capable of receiving, our talk about a democratic socialist society will have no meaning. It is not too much to hope that in the future development plans education will be given much more attention than it has received so far and by the end of the Fourth Plan, i.e. by 1971 through the combined efforts of the Union and State Governments, the local bodies and private charitable agencies, provisions will have been made

for eight years' free and compulsory schooling and for ample educational stipends to enable the deserving boys and girls belonging to low income groups to go in for higher education.

As far as the problem of integrated education is concerned very little thought has been given to it so far. Mahatma Gandhi alone had the vision to see that the division of education at the earliest stage into intellectual, spiritual and vocational and the existence of separate institutions for these three types of education led to a defective and one-sided development of our children. It did not help them to grow into integrated personalities or enable them to rise to their full stature. He laid, therefore, the greatest stress on the harmonious development of "hand, head and heart" at the primarv stage of education. The following will give some idea of what he meant by education :

> I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of bodily organs, e.g. hands, feet, ears, nose, etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean the education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one-another.[1]

To give a practical shape to his concept of education Gandhiji sought the help of educational experts to draw

[1] *Harijan*, 8 May, 1937, p. 104.

up a scheme of basic education according to the principle that all knowledge, skills, and activities which were regarded to be necessary for the education of the child should centre round some useful craft and the whole process should be permitted with the spirit of the social and moral philosophy based on Truth and Non-Violence. The Government of India also has accepted with some reservation the scheme of Basic Education and wants all primary education to be gradually re-modelled on this pattern. The number of Basic schools is being steadily increased. At the end of 1956, schools of this type were educating over 1.1 million children. By the end of 1961 their number will be enough to cater for 4.2 million and will go on rising during the future plans.

But there is one important difference between the Government scheme and Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education. While Government basic schools emphasize the integration of intellectual and manual education they have eliminated the spiritual element. It is said in justification of this policy that in a secular state public education cannot bear the stamp of any particular spiritual or religious philosophy. But the word "spiritual" has a wider connotation than religion comprehends the concepts of fundamental moral and social values. Spiritualism in this sense must be the very basis of education in a secular democratic state. In fact a democratic socialist society, such as we aspire to build in India cannot come into being unless the education of its children is infused with the spirit of democracy and socialism. This does not mean the ideology of any particular school of thought or political party, but the general ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, tolerance, co-operativeness, peaceableness, self-control, self-respect and social responsibility—human qualities which education in a democratic socialist state must instil in the mind and incorporate in the character of every child as the future citizen of the state.

When all is said and done, the real problem of Indian Nationhood and National Culture is that India is the

home of one of the oldest peoples, who are at the same time one of the youngest nations in the modern sense of the word "nation". As a people Indians have a set pattern of life anchored firmly in time-honoured traditions; as a nation they are exposed to the flux and flurry, the storm and stress of the modern age. They do not want to lose their moorings and be swept away by, what looks to them the ruthless and aimless, swelling and raging tide of the present but they feel that after choosing the lot of a free democratic state, they simply cannot remain stuck in the pacific but stagnant backwaters of the past. So they have to strike a balance between the static and the dynamic; the old and the new.

This is the real issue and which has to be faced in the ultimate analysis. But before this problem can be properly tackled, the more urgent one, of harmonizing the diversity of group-cultures with the fundamental unity of a common National Culture has to be solved. In the foregoing pages we have made our humble contribution towards solving the problem, by stating it as clearly as we could, by stressing its importance and by offering a few practical suggestions. But the actual solution requires the combined efforts of all intellectual and political leaders whose duty and privilege is to guide the destiny of India at this critical juncture in her history. If we succeed in convincing them that the cultural problem facing India is no less important than the political and the economic, our task shall have been accomplished.

OURS IS BUT TO CONVEY (the message)

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